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Ellen Mordant.









ELLEN MORDAUNT

JAMES NISBET & CO. BERNERS STREET.

ELLEN MORDAUNT;

OR,

THE EFFECTS OF TRUE RELIGION.

A Tale.

"I love them that love Me; and those that seek Me early
shall find Me."—PROVERBS viii. 17.

London:

JAMES NISBET AND CO., BERNERS STREET.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE following Story was not written with a view to publication, and had private feeling alone been consulted, it probably would never have been given to the world; but the Writer has yielded to the advice of kind, but perhaps too partial friends.

It was written with the intention of perpetuating the memory of scenes in this sunny land, rendered dear by many associations, and of traits of character, which at various times came under her observation. It is, therefore, a satisfaction for her to know that in perusing it, indulgent Reader, your time is not wasted on mere fiction; and should it prove useful in leading any to long after growth in

grace, or to cherish love in these uncharitable days for all who love and serve the Lord Jesus, her disinclination to appear in print will be abundantly compensated.

LEGHORN,
July 24, 1850.

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ELLEN MORDAUNT.

CHAPTER I.

THE RETURN FROM SCHOOL.

"But, oh! of all delightful sounds,
Of evening or of morn,
The sweetest is the voice of love,
That welcomes his return."
SOUTHEY.

"AM I really at home, once more?" exclaimed Ellen, jumping out of her bed with much greater alacrity than usual. She ran to the window and flung it open, inhaling with delight the balmy air of a bright summer morning, the tears starting to her eyes as the familiar scenery met her view. "I have seen some pretty places since I left home, but have never met with any which had charms for me such as this."

Indulging her own pleasant thoughts, Ellen stood at the window, till the striking of the clock reminded her that the breakfast hour was approaching. "How strict I used to think papa," thought Ellen, as she hastened to dress herself; "I do not feel that now."

As soon as she was ready, Ellen ran down stairs to the breakfast-room. In the open door which led out into the garden, her father was

standing, and she ran to him, and threw her arms round him. He returned her embrace affectionately, and smiling, kindly said, "Well, Ellen, do you like home better than school?"

"O papa," said Ellen, looking eagerly in his face, and taking hold of his hand, "you can have no idea how happy I am to be at my dear home, and with you again."

"Ah! you are an idle girl, I fear," said he, shaking his head, "you are glad to be emancipated from the school-room."

"No, no," returned Ellen, "you shall see that I am not idle."

At this moment the door opened, and her mother came in, holding by the hand a little boy with fair curls. As Ellen went up to kiss her mother, she involuntarily started at the sight of her pale face. Having arrived at home too late on the preceding evening to be able to judge, she felt unexpectedly shocked at the lines in her face, and the thinness of her cheeks—now clearly discernible. With natural tact, however, Ellen hastily recovered herself, and having kissed her mother, stooped down to speak to little Willie, whom she had only seen for a few minutes the evening before, when he sat up in his tiny bed to kiss her. Quick, however, as she had been, her father had perceived her surprise. He said nothing then, but seated himself at the breakfast-table, where they were almost immediately joined by Ellen's sister and brother, Annie and Robert. At this sociable meal, the conversa-

tion became cheerful, and general, and Ellen soon recovered her buoyant spirits. She looked smilingly round the table at her little companions, whose faces beamed the pleasure they felt at her return.

When breakfast was over, Mr. Mordaunt went into the garden, where the children followed him. Ellen stopped for a moment to consider whether she would not go and unpack her things, when her mother came up to her, and kissing her, said,

“Go with your father, my dear child, I am sure you are longing to see the garden again.”

With one bound, Ellen was at her father's side, the place where, of all others, she most loved to be; and she began to talk to him.

“How beautiful the garden is looking, dear papa; every thing is in order, there is not a weed to be seen; and how glad I am to be walking with you again, my darling papa; how well my brothers and sister look—and I think they are very much grown. Do you think I am grown, papa?” she added, laughing, and drawing herself up.

Without answering her question, her father turned to her, and said,

“How do you think mamma is looking, Ellen?”

Ellen coloured, and hesitated.

“I see what you are thinking,” continued her father, “but you need not be afraid of speaking the truth to me, for I am well aware of what you would say. I only asked you, because one who has been for a time absent can be a better judge

than those who see her daily. Your mother has been ailing ever since the death of little Henry."

"You wrote me that she felt that very much," said Ellen, "but I did not expect to see such a change. Poor little Henry, how much I longed to be at home then, just to see him once more; but I hope mamma is not really very ill, papa?"

"I hope not, also, but I fear she is," returned her father. "I mean to consult a doctor on the subject. But I look to you, Ellen, in any case, to relieve her of all possible trouble. This expectation was one reason why I decided on taking you from school this half-year, and I hope I shall not be disappointed."

Though this was said very kindly, it was also with great decision, so that Ellen's immediate answer was, "O papa, I shall be too happy to relieve mamma."

A feeling of repugnance to exert herself rose up at the same moment in her mind. She was ashamed of it, and checked it. She felt it was wicked; but she did not know how to overcome it, and a sort of struggle was going on when her father resumed,

"From nine to twelve every day, I shall expect you, Ellen, to occupy yourself with your little sister and brothers: your two years' schooling will not I hope have been wasted upon you. From twelve to two, you will generally have to walk out with them. From four to five, you will be again required in the school-room; and after that, you will have

time to read, or work, or whatever else you please. This is the plan I have settled, as the best for the present; your mother and I will be at hand to assist you, and to overlook; but for the actual work I depend upon you."

Ellen's heart sunk as she heard this proposal. She had cherished sweet visions of reading, writing, gardening, in short, amusing herself on her return from school. All these were to be given up, and she was to begin as it were her own studies all over again, in teaching the little children whom she was too much disposed to treat as such. She knew her father's house, and was well aware of the fact, that the hours, professedly called her own, would be continually broken in upon by numerous things, some useful, others unnecessary; "and when," thought she, "shall I read any thing steadily through, in this way?"

Conscious, however, that she was wrong in hesitating to be of use, and knowing also her father's strict requirement of the fulfilment of duty, she carefully concealed her feelings, and gave a cheerful acquiescence, after which her father began to talk of other things. And Ellen talked too, but while she talked, she was carrying on a train of thought about her mother's illness and her new occupations. At first, indeed, all had seemed dark and disappointing, but gradually things looked brighter and more cheering. She was just at that time of life when new employments seem to make periods in our existence, and Ellen felt as if she had arrived at

one of these periods ; and painful as was the thought of her mother's delicate state, she thought it would be after all very pleasant to have something settled to do. There was moreover in Ellen's mind an upright sense of duty, and with this a proportionate pleasure in the performance of it. In this, however, poor child, she often failed—and that for two reasons ; one was a natural want of steady perseverance in any thing she undertook ; but a still stronger cause was the almost total want of any thing like enlightened principle, by which to govern her actions.

Although a strictly honourable man, upright and even conscientious, and blessed with a very amiable disposition, Ellen's father was a *man of the world*, and ruled his family and household by the world's principles. His love of domestic comfort, and country scenery and occupations, kept him from much worldly society, and grounded in his children home-like affections and refined tastes and feelings ; but the higher and purer motives, the more elevating sources of pleasure, the brightest hopes, and the happiest feelings, were unknown in Mr. Mordaunt's family. In his earlier days he had mixed more with the world, and though he was not enchained by its pleasures, and was disgusted with its dissipations and heartlessness, yet he was tainted by its atmosphere, and affected by its principles ; and he looked upon more serious, and more singular persons than himself, as bigots and enthusiasts, although he possessed too liberal and amiable

a mind, to treat them personally with scorn or incivility. Yet with a certainly unrenewed heart, Mr. Mordaunt was not entirely without some religious feelings. He revered the Maker of all things, offered Him sincere adoration, and was conscientiously truthful and honest and upright in his transactions with others. The want of more enlightened religion than this made him often stern, and perhaps exacting, with his children and servants, yet his amiable temper secured their warm affection. His children were brought up in such ignorance of the Gospel, so neglected was this part of their education, that it was surprising they knew the little they had actually, by some means or other, acquired.

Mrs. Mordaunt was even less thoughtful than himself when he married her, but delicate health, and the loss of a lovely boy of eight months old, had sobered her, and now she was, in her own opinion at least, more *religious* than ever she had been before. She was much less liberal in her views than her husband, and more under the influence of sudden impulses, and a quick temper; but there was a warmth of affection, and a sterling sincerity about her, that were truly estimable. She was devotedly attached to her husband, and she mistook contentment with his society, and a distaste for the gaieties of the world, caused by ill health and sorrow of heart, for an increase of the power of religious influences, which she imagined was the preparation necessary for heaven.

Under these circumstances, it will not be wondered at that Ellen was as ignorant as we have represented her to be. Though amiable in disposition, she had often been a troublesome child; but during her younger years, the principal defects of her character had not been so apparent. Never having been taught to fear God, she had often been deceitful; and while tolerably obedient in the presence of her parents, scrupled not to be far less careful when they could not see her. As she grew older, her waywardness became more visible, and she would very frequently return an impatient answer, give way to perverseness and idleness, and manifest other symptoms that awakened her parents' anxieties; so that, when she was between twelve and thirteen, they decided on sending her to school. This was Ellen's first real trial; but though she earnestly requested it might at least be postponed, her parents were decided on the subject, and hoped that absence from home, and school discipline, would work wonders. Ellen had therefore spent two years and a half at a large school, where she had gained much information on every subject except one, but that was the "one thing needful."

Something, however, had been gained, which might form a kind of preparation for that, if it should be presented to her. She had learnt to value her home; though always dear, she had not known how dear it was until she was far from it. She had been lonely, too, among her companions; for gradually, as her mind and character

became developed, her natural sincerity and simplicity, which bad habits had much overclouded at home, gained strength, and she could not feel sympathy in the heartless foolishness of many of them. To one or two of them she became attached, as well as to her teacher; but with the rest, though she was interested in them all, she had less in common. Then an appreciation of her father's character, who from her earliest childhood had been the centre of her strongest affections, was awakened with a life and vigour of which till now she had not been conscious, the desire to please and imitate him, and a vague notion of duty, was indeed her only principle and guiding star; but this was something, if it was not much. She had grieved much and sincerely for the loss of her baby brother, and there seemed as if now she had some personal attraction in that soft blue sky above, for there she knew her brother was gone. And now, as she walked by her dear father's side and marked his anxiety, she was thinking how delightful it would be to fulfil and even surpass all his wishes. He *should* see she had not been to school for nothing. "Surely," she thought, "a new life is opening before me." True, Ellen, so there was; but how little were you aware of the nature of that life.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHANGE.

"We've no abiding city here,
Sad truth, were this to be our home;
But let the thought our spirits cheer,
We seek a city yet to come."

KELLY.

ON the following Monday Ellen began her work, and for a few days all was smooth; but soon difficulties arose. Ellen herself, in the first place, was new to teaching, and more patience was necessary than she thought she possessed. Annie would grow listless and troublesome. Robert would play strange tricks, and ask all manner of extraneous questions; and little Willie preferred watching the flies buzz round the room to looking in his book. Then, when her mother was pretty well, she would come in, and very frequently disarrange or find fault with Ellen's plans, and sometimes blame her so openly, that a blush of shame and vexation would rise into her cheeks; for she knew she would be told by her little pupils when they did not like to accede to her requirements, that "Mamma had said so and so," "Mamma did not teach them that way." To say the truth, Ellen was not always very judicious; and more than once, her impatience was so great, as to justify fully her

father's censure before she left the room for the night. Poor Ellen was greatly disheartened ; and one night, when she had received one of these reproofs, and defended herself, till a hasty word had drawn down a still sterner command to be silent, she ran up to her room, shut fast the door, and burst into tears. She cried till her head ached, and then dashing away her tears, began to ask herself the cause of her sorrow. Too plainly she saw herself in fault, and with a heart heavy with shame and weariness she went to bed. She knelt down to say her prayers, and again felt shame at her wandering thoughts. " But what can I do ? " thought she. " I am very tired. I will go to bed." And so she did. These sad moments were of frequent repetition, but she still tried to do better ; and hope of final success upheld her.

In the meanwhile her mother continued very unwell, so that at last Mr. Mordaunt took her to London, to consult an eminent physician, leaving Ellen and the children at home. For a little while after their return, nothing was said of the result of their journey, but Ellen's quick eye detected a grave expression on her father's face, and an anxious one on her mother's.

At last, one morning after breakfast, when the children had gone away to play, as Ellen was leaving the room, her father said—

" Ellen, stay a few minutes, I want to speak to you. Sit down."

She sat down directly.

"You know I went to London to consult Dr. —, about your mother."

"Yes, papa."

"You do not know the result of that visit?"

"No, papa," said Ellen, looking up with interest.

"It was this : no decided disease, but the winter here must be avoided ; a removal to a warmer climate must be effected."

"Papa!" was the only exclamation that escaped Ellen, but she looked anxiously at her mother, and then ran to her, the tears bursting from her eyes. Her mother kissed her affectionately, and smiling said —

"You must not be alarmed," dear Ellen.

"No," said her father, "I trust there is no cause for alarm, but we must take every precaution ; and the place recommended is Nice in Piedmont," added he.

"O papa," exclaimed Ellen ; "how glad I am that is the place we are going to.

"Why so?" he enquired. "I did not know that *you* had any reason to single that spot out, above all others."

"Papa, one of my schoolfellows, Louisa Maxwell, had been there with her family for her eldest sister's health ; and I have heard her speak of its beautiful climate and lovely scenery so often, that I feel as if I knew it already."

"And that reminds me," said Mr. Mordaunt, "of a circumstance which I had forgotten. Our

new clergyman, Joseph Maxwell, will be coming into office just a fortnight before we leave this. I dare not put off our journey beyond the beginning of September, and he will be arriving about the end of August."

"That is unfortunate," said Mrs. Mordaunt, "and the more so, as I had a project in my head." And she looked with a smile at her husband.

"What do you mean?" said he very kindly. "Tell me your project, my love."

"It is this," said she, "that as we could not take our dear boy Arthur from his studies, we should place him with Joseph till our return."

"I think your project a very good one," answered her husband; "but we must first see our young friend, for though his father was one of the best fellows in the world, I have not sufficient faith in the doctrine, that children inherit their parents' qualities, to place my boy with him without knowing him personally."

Mr. Mordaunt did not consider that he was doing for the parish what he would not do for his own son.

Mrs. Mordaunt, however, did not feel so scrupulous.

She had heard her husband expatiate upon his early friend, Sir John Maxwell, till she fancied him a hero, or something yet more nearly approaching perfection; and she was quite prepared to welcome his son with all the warmth of her affectionate nature.

The conversation ended by Mr. Mordaunt consenting to call forthwith upon the present clergyman, who was about to leave for another sphere, and see if some arrangement could not be made for young Maxwell to fill his post sooner than had been first intended. And so they did arrange it. The clergyman, who was a good-natured man, entered into Mr. Mordaunt's feelings and projects. Mr. Maxwell was written to, and within a fortnight from the above conversation he arrived at the parsonage.

CHAPTER III.

THE NEW MINISTER.

"Who hath despised the day of small things?"

ZECH. iv. 10.

BUT Ellen—what were her feelings on the prospect of leaving England? Pleasure predominated; for at her age troubles are seldom realised, and the beauties of Italy, of which she had so often heard from her young companion, had long filled her imagination, though in secret.

The Sunday arrived on which Mr. Maxwell was to commence his duties. Ellen had not yet met him, and she felt a natural curiosity to see the son of one of whom she had heard so much, whose name she had learnt to reverence, and from early childhood to associate with almost the only tears she had ever seen her father shed, which burst from his eyes when receiving the news of his friend's death.

With her little brother's hand in hers, her father walking before with her sister, Ellen bent her steps through the fields to church. The walk, though short, was very pleasant, for the day was fine, and there was something cheerful in the sight of the country people flocking to church on all sides.

They entered the door of the sanctuary, and sat

down in their places. The children had been taught to behave with external decorum in the house of God; but, alas! it was *only* external. Even Ellen, though she kept her eye on her book, paid generally but little attention to the prayers, and still less to the sermon. When Mr. Maxwell came in, Ellen looked at him with interest. He seemed very young, and she was surprised, for she knew he had a wife and child. His fair hair and complexion, and slight figure, added to the delicacy of his appearance; but Ellen felt an awe and reverence she had never experienced before, when he began to read. That his heart was in the words was unmistakeable; nor less so, when in the singing he joined with a sweet rich note. Ellen seldom thought of singing in church—it had seemed to her a lawful moment to repose from the exertion of attending, and to think of other things. To-day, however, she could not do so; and even when the Psalm was ended, the last words still sounded in her ears.

“His truth, which always firmly stood,
To endless ages shall endure.”

What it meant she did not ask herself, and perhaps, if she had, she would not have been able to tell.

And now the text was given out, and these were the words:—

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” Isa. lv. 1.

He opened his sermon by saying, that it was usual on a minister's beginning a new career to speak of himself; "but such," he continued, "is not my purpose to-day. I have nothing to say of myself but what you already know, and therefore, I shall at once address you on behalf of that Master, 'whose I am, and whom I desire to serve.'" The unaffected simplicity with which he said this, gave him a dignity none could fail of being impressed with. He proceeded to describe the different kinds of that thirst which at one time or other is felt by all, and then repeated the invitation of the text—"And yet," he said, "I may not have included all; there may be one here whose case lies so hidden, his thirst so secret, that I cannot describe it. My friend, do not imagine yourself shut out. The great God above you knows it all, and *He* it is who says, 'Ho, EVERY ONE that thirsteth; come ye to the waters.'" Then he described what the waters are, and in glowing but very simple language preached a crucified Saviour, concluding thus, "My dear friends, I may be unlearned in the wisdom of this world, I may not possess the gift of eloquence, but here I declare, in the sight of God, my desire 'to spend and be spent' in labouring for your spiritual welfare; and this I pray, that I may 'know nothing among you save Jesus Christ, our Almighty, Only, and All-Sufficient Saviour.'"

The sermon over, the congregation dispersed, Mr. Mordaunt went to the vestry to invite his friend to dinner, and the children waited for him.

"Do, sister Ellen," said Robert, "do come into the church-yard, I want to show you Henry's grave," and he pulled her by her gown.

Where were Ellen's thoughts? what made her so unusually silent? Robert's words, however, recalled her. It was just what she had longed for, but had not ventured to ask. She followed him through the gate, and to the side of a little grave, round which rose-trees now in full bloom were planted, while near it a beautiful willow waved its long branches. They all stood together near it, and even Robert and Annie were silent for a few minutes, with natural tact, as Ellen, for the first time, looked on her brother's grave.

How strange it seemed to her that he whom she remembered seeing on her mother's knee, smiling in health and happiness, was now lying under that marble cold and still. Her thoughts went involuntarily upwards to the sky, and some confused ideas of angels and sweet songs came over her. Then a sudden thought came—yes, she too must die—and when? If she were to die *now*, would she be with little Henry? that she did not know.

"I can read these long names now, Ellen," said Robert, "I can read what is on Henry's grave—

Sacred to the Memory of

HENRY,

YOUNGEST SON OF EDWARD AND MARY MORDAUNT.

AGED EIGHT MONTHS.

Now I will tell you what this is," said he, turning

to the next, and skipping over the dates, which were not so easy to read—

Here Lies

MARY ANN,

THE ONLY DAUGHTER OF JOHN AND SUSAN PETERS,
AGED FIFTEEN YEARS.

(Fifteen! that's just my age, thought Ellen.)

SHE DEPARTED THIS LIFE WITH A GOOD HOPE THAT HER
SINS WERE FORGIVEN THROUGH HER LORD AND
SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

And here's a verse, Annie, but there's a hard word in it, will you read it?"

Annie read—

"For ever with the Lord;
Amen! so let it be,
Life from the dead is in that word,
'Tis immortality!"

"Immortality!" repeated Robert, standing on the grave to look nearer at it. "What a long word, what does it mean, Annie?"

"I don't know," said Annie, "Ellen, dear, will you tell us?"

"It means," said Ellen, "to live for ever."

"To live for ever!" again repeated Robert, "Ah that means in heaven I suppose; but I don't quite understand that verse, will you explain it to me, Ellen?"

Ellen felt this was beyond her power, so she put it aside by asking if he had seen Henry after his death?

"Yes," replied he, "we all saw him. Mamma did not want us to see him at first, but Willie cried so, and wouldn't believe he was dead, and so papa took us all in; how white he looked, and how cold he was too, and mamma cried sadly, and said, he was an angel now, and she bid us all be good children, and we should go to heaven too some day, and see him again; and then they brought him away, and put him in the ground."

"And, then," continued Annie, "The very same day Mary Anne Peters was buried."

"I remember her," said Ellen, speaking more mournfully than she herself was aware of—"She was such a strong merry girl, and a very naughty one too. She was always being punished, the school-mistress told me."

"Ah, but," said Annie, "She became good before she died."

"Her mother told me she never told a lie, or said a bad word, all the time she was ill; and she asked her father to have that verse put on her grave." Ellen read the verse again, and wondered why she chose it. Annie went on talking, half to her, and half to Robert—

"I saw her once, a little while before she died, she was sitting outside the door reading; she looked so thin; and at last, she got weaker and weaker, and died; and she was buried the same day as Henry."

"She was older than Henry, though," said Robert; "look, aged fifteen." He was only eight

months old; and there, under those trees, is one aged fifty; they are almost all different ages. Why, Annie? Why do people die when they are old and young? And why does any body die?"

Annie hesitated.

"I will tell you, my boy," said a voice near. The children started; it was Mr. Maxwell, who had left Mr. Mordaunt talking to one of his farmers, and had been attracted to the churchyard by the sound of voices. The little ones knew him, having been to the parsonage before with their father, and they smiled with pleasure. He bowed kindly to Ellen, and then said to Robert, "Can you read, my boy?"

"O yes, sir," said Robert, "I am nearly six years old." "Well, then," said the clergyman, "read this," and he drew a Bible from his pocket.

Robert read from the fifth of Romans,—“By one man’s disobedience sin came into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”

“Do you know,” asked Mr. Maxwell, “what is the meaning of these words, ‘one man’s disobedience?’”

“No,” answered Robert.

“What,” said Mr. Maxwell, “did you never hear of Adam and Eve?”

“No,” said Robert again.

Ellen felt her colour rise, as she saw a look of surprise on Mr. Maxwell’s face. A smile of kindness, however, succeeded that look, and drawing the

children closer to him, and seating himself on a neighbouring tombstone, he said, "Come here, and I will tell you about Adam and Eve."

Then, in the simplest language, he related the history of our first parents' fall from a state of deathless purity to one of sin and death, and the consequences of their disobedience.

"And look round, my children," he continued, "at all these graves. You asked what was the reason of them, and I answer it was Adam's disobedience; since then, every one has been sinful, therefore every one must die; and can you tell me the worst thing of all,—can you tell me what place is prepared for the wicked?"

"*Hell*," answered both the children, in a deep and solemn tone.

"Yes," answered the good young clergyman, "and there we all deserve to go, and what is more, we *should* certainly go there, if our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ had not come down from heaven to save sinners. He took pity on us, and came to suffer our punishment, so that all who love Him might at the last great day rise up with joy, and 'be for ever with the Lord.'"

"Oh," exclaimed Robert, "that is what is written here. Look, look, sir;" and he caught hold of Mr. Maxwell's hand to draw him towards the grave of Mary Anne Peters.

Mr. Maxwell seemed much moved as he read the simple inscription, then sighing deeply as he turned away, he repeated—

"Life from the dead is in that word,
'Tis immortality!"

Just then Mr. Mordaunt came towards them: he extended a cordial hand to Mr. Maxwell, saying, "Well, Joseph, since you will not dine with us, I wish you good-day.—Come, children." Mr. Maxwell held out a kind hand to both the children. Their sweet smiles told their feelings towards him.

"You have won these children's hearts already, Mr. Maxwell," said Mr. Mordaunt.

Mr. Maxwell smiled, and turning to Ellen, said, "I believe this is Miss Mordaunt?"

Ellen answered by offering her hand, and then they set out on the way home. They found Mrs. Mordaunt sitting in the drawing-room, with little Willie. Her first words were,

"Where is Joseph?"

"Safe at the parsonage, I conclude, by this time," replied her husband, "he declined dining with us to-day, and has fixed to-morrow instead."

"How sorry I am," said Mrs. Mordaunt, in a disappointed tone; "and how did you like him, Edward?"

"O, very well," answered Mr. Mordaunt, "he is very gentleman-like, and his expression is very like his poor father's, as I told you before. He gave us a very good sermon, though not quite so orthodox as old Mr. Wilkinson."

"How?" enquired his wife with surprise.

"Why," replied he, "his youth may account for it. He is very zealous in his profession, as most

young men, fresh starting, are. A few years will sober him."

"And why would he not dine with us to-day?" pursued Mrs. Mordaunt, "Why do you smile, Edward?"

"Because, my love," replied he, "I cannot myself see how any clerical proprieties need hinder a man from dining with a friend on Sunday. However, every one to his mind. He has lost, perhaps, a better dinner than he will get at his own house; but if it would have troubled his conscience, why, he was wise to refuse. To-morrow, my dear, we will give him a warm welcome here. Poor John Maxwell!" added he, with a sigh. "Memories of the past crowd in at the sight of his son."

Ellen had soon escaped to her own room, and hastily taking off her walking-dress, stood at the window in deep meditation. New and strange thoughts crowded in upon her mind. The principal one was sadness at the thoughts of death, not unmingled with alarm. The sermon had impressed her, and disposed her to reflection; and the sight of her brother's grave, and the other inscription, had given a direction to thoughts and feelings otherwise vague and wandering. She had listened as to some new thing, while Mr. Maxwell was talking to her brother and sister. The simplicity of his words only gave them additional force; and as she stood watching him, his own language, "the Master whose I am, and whom I serve," struck again upon her heart, investing him with

a dignity and authority she had never before known a minister to possess. "Yes, I must die; all must die," thought she, "and he said, God was holy, and could not let sin go unpunished—have I sinned? yes, I know I have often; but God is merciful, and I dare say He will forgive me. But suppose He should not?" Here Ellen grew more thoughtful still, and her mind went back to her younger days, and to many things she had done which she knew to be very wrong.

"That falsehood I told about the box I had broken, but which I said I knew nothing about, and papa always thought that James, the gardener's boy, had done it; that day I went outside to play in the fields, when papa and mamma were both out and never knew it; that wicked temper, when—but I was very young then! Ah! true—I used sometimes to read over the book at school. I knew that was deceitful. Well, I will do better in future, I will begin at once to be a dutiful and truthful child. At this moment her father's voice was heard calling, "Dinner." Ellen ran down, they were already seated, and she took her seat with a much more thoughtful air than usual. Her late thoughts had solemnised her, and without being aware of it, she sat silently, while the rest were talking.

"Ellen!" said her father at last so suddenly, that she started, "Why do you look so gloomy, child?"

"Gloomy, papa, I am not gloomy," said she, the blood starting to her cheeks.

"What were you thinking of?" said her mother.

Ellen hesitated, and at last she said, "I was thinking of some things Mr. Maxwell was saying to the children to-day, mamma."

"How did he see them?" asked Mrs. Mordaunt.

"In the church-yard, mamma," said Annie.

"What were you doing there?"

"I took Ellen in, mamma, to show her little Henry's grave, and Mr. Maxwell came in and talked so much to us, and said such beautiful things."

Mrs. Mordaunt turned her head away, and the tears fell fast. Mr. Mordaunt cast a reproachful look on poor Ellen, who sat regretting what had happened. She did not think she had done wrong, yet her father's look implied it. Silence reigned for some time, but at last cheerfulness was in some measure restored, and Ellen, making a strong effort, joined in the conversation as usual. But the impression made did not pass so soon. A kind of shadow of death seemed to pursue her through the day, caused no doubt by the new and strange feeling of looking on the grave of one she had loved, and still the words rang in her ears,

"Life from the dead is in that word,
'Tis immortality."

"Life from the dead!" she repeated to herself.
"Ah! what is that? I wish I knew, for I too must die!"

CHAPTER IV.

ARTHUR.

"They watch for your souls, as they that must give account."

HEN. xiii. 17.

THE following day Mr. Maxwell dined at Mordaunt House. He quite won Mrs. Mordaunt's heart by his simple gentlemanly manners, his kindness to the children, and his interest in her plants, her books, and whatever interested her. When he was gone, she said to her husband,

"I think, my love, we may safely confide our dear Arthur to his care, and I shall leave home much more contentedly if I know my boy is in a family, than if he is at school. When is Mrs. Maxwell expected?"

"Not just yet, I believe," replied Mr. Mordaunt, "she is with her own family, as she has a young baby, and Mr. Maxwell was anxious to keep her quiet till he got a little settled. I think we may very well leave Arthur with him, if he consents to take charge of him. He is young, certainly, but I am not sure whether this is not an advantage with Arthur's disposition. He is very zealous, too, and strict; but this, also, may perhaps be a good thing

for a boy of Arthur's years. It will keep down those wild spirits of his."

The result of this was an arrangement between Mr. Maxwell and the Mordaunts, that he should receive Arthur at the parsonage, while they were abroad; to which Mr. Maxwell responded with such evident pleasure, that Mr. Mordaunt was surprised.

"You are not considering the tie this will be to you, Mr. Maxwell," said he, "nor the troublesome boy you will have to deal with; but he is affectionate, and if you can bind him *there*, he will be manageable."

And if Mr. Mordaunt could have followed Mr. Maxwell home, and looked into his private study that evening, he would have been yet more surprised. He would have seen that engaging smile on his lips grow more and more heavenly in its expression, till his countenance assumed a serenity, and yet a seriousness and humility, which looked not like the men of this world. He would have seen him pace his little room like one in deep thought, and from time to time speaking half aloud, — "Yes, surely this is an answer to my prayer. How often have I prayed that my coming to this place might prove a blessing to my father's friend. I think I still hear that beloved voice, as death was fast approaching, in faltering accents bid me 'labour for the salvation of *his* soul.' Ah! they are yet in darkness. I see it too plainly. But how amiable: how engaging! and those lovely children

—can it be, that they shall not be numbered among the flock? But this is doubting; this unlooked for arrangement is certainly a ‘token for good.’ The eldest girl looks thoughtful; but surely if she had the smallest measure of light, she would have taught those little ones, at least the *history* of the Bible? Perhaps she is not allowed? Well, I will use all my endeavours, and the Lord will guide and strengthen me.”

Within a few days Arthur was sent for. He arrived in bounding spirits, and leaping off the horse which had conveyed him home, and flinging the bridle into the servant’s hands, he rushed into the drawing-room, and sprang into his mother’s arms.

“Gently, my boy;” said his father, “you forget that your mother is not so strong and stout as yourself—stand up, and let us look at you.”

Arthur drew himself up to be surveyed; while his countenance beamed with happiness and glee. When the greetings were over, he was told the plans regarding himself—at which he drew a long face.

“And so I am to be shut up in the parsonage!” said he. “It will be a dreary time for me, while you are all enjoying yourselves. Well, never mind,” he added, as he saw the effect of his words on his mother; “I will be a tame bird for your sake, mamma.”

“Arthur,” said his father, “you must learn that those wild rebellious spirits of yours will

not do now. I hoped you had left them behind you."

Arthur coloured, and said no more; but it was evident he felt great repugnance at the idea of *the parsonage*.

By special invitation, Mr. Maxwell came to tea that evening, to make acquaintance with his future pupil. There was something in the warm impetuous enthusiasm of Arthur's character that found its way immediately to Mr. Maxwell's heart; and not less was Arthur won by his kindness. It was evident, by the bound with which the boy sprang to open the door for him, and his subdued but cheerful voice, as he went down stairs, that a favourable impression had been made. Nor were they mistaken. Mr. Maxwell indeed only treated Arthur as he treated every one—with kindness; but it was that considerate kindness which enters into the feelings of the person addressed; be that person, man, woman, or child. And this was precisely what Arthur did not receive at home. Though a most truly affectionate father, Mr. Mordaunt did not always discriminate between mistakes caused by the ardour and inexperience of childhood, and faults which had their foundation in the moral character. The boy felt unconsciously this injustice, and his heart went out with delight to one who would sympathise in the experiments and amusements in which he was interested. But at the same time, it was remarkable that he behaved to Mr. Maxwell with a respect that prevented

any undue familiarity; and if his spirits sometimes rose too high, while his father's commands would only silence for the moment, but failed to subdue; a word, a look, from Mr. Maxwell calmed and sobered him at once.

Time passed rapidly on. It was a momentous time for Ellen. Mr. Maxwell's sermons came to her young mind with a freshness, that made her look from Sunday to Sunday, with an eagerness she had never felt before. Owing to her great ignorance of Scripture, and indeed of religion altogether, she was often unable to follow him clearly; but a certain impression was always made, and gradually, and insensibly, religion became the principal subject of her thoughts. It being so perfectly new to her, only added to the concentration of her feelings; and whatever he advised in the pulpit, she endeavoured to put in practice. Hearing him preach very soon after his arrival, on the necessity and advantages of studying the Word of God, she set to work to read her Bible daily. But many difficulties beset her. She was so unaccustomed to its style and expressions, that often she could not understand what she read: and a still greater obstacle was her complete ignorance of the commonest and most essential doctrines of the Christian religion.

She knew that God is Eternal, Omniscient, and Omnipresent; that there are Three Persons in one God; she knew that Jesus Christ had suffered on the cross for sinners; but what particular benefit

she was to derive from this she could not tell. She believed in heaven and hell, but how to obtain the one, and escape the other, was a very vague idea. To do her duty, and when she failed, repent and trust to the mercy of God, was her desire; but how that mercy was to be given, and how to be sure of it, she was ignorant. The doctrines of the corruption of the human heart, and its alienation from God—of the free mercy of God, as covenanted from everlasting ages, and made known in the Gospel—of the only method of obtaining salvation, namely, faith in the Saviour—and of the regenerating influences of the Spirit of God; she knew and understood nothing. Mr. Maxwell preached these with simplicity and earnestness; but to one so ignorant as Ellen, who did not even come to Church every week, time and much teaching were necessary before she could fully understand them. She was, as yet, like the blind man of Bethsaida, when with sight only partially restored, he saw “men as trees walking.” Another touch of the Almighty hand was necessary ere she could see *clearly*. Surely, it is a blessed thing to have been instructed in truth from childhood. Instruction, indeed, is not conversion; but it paves the way, it prepares the mind, when that momentous hour arrives, to receive with saving power the truths with which it is already familiar. To those who have been so trained, the language of Scripture is not an unknown tongue; nor are its doctrines, mysteries, into which they have no insight. In the time of

alarm, when an awakened conscience whispers of the wrath to come, they know whither to flee for refuge; for they have heard of a Saviour's love at their mother's knee, and memory suggests many a sweet Scriptural promise, many a holy hymn, once uncared for, unvalued, indeed, but now precious and comforting to their souls. Such comfort Ellen possessed not. What lessons from the Bible she had learnt were associated with punishments, weariness, and a page blistered with tears. Now she turned to it, as has been said, with new feelings; but it was as yet an almost sealed book. Still much was gained—more than she herself knew. She learnt to feel her own inability to do any good thing, and to believe, though very vaguely, that Jesus Christ alone could save her. She thought indeed that, in order to be a partaker of His salvation, she herself must do much. She must do her duty—fulfil every thing assigned to her; and therefore she addressed herself to the task more sedulously than ever. How often she failed, how many tears she shed after receiving her father's severe rebuke, or her mother's vexed complaint, we cannot record here. Mr. Maxwell noticed her quiet, attentive behaviour in the sanctuary, and her modest unassuming manners at home. He saw with pleasure too, that when in conversation he dropped a word as from the Christian minister, while Mrs. Mordaunt changed the conversation directly, and Mordaunt himself gave only a cold assent, Ellen's blue eyes were turned towards him with an

expression of interest he could not mistake. He tried to speak to her, and to sound her feelings; but she shrank from this so evidently, that he did not like to press it, lest he should check the very thing he wished to foster

CHAPTER V.

THE DEPARTURE.

"We cannot always trace the way,
Where Thou our gracious God dost move ;
But we can always surely say
That Thou art Love."

AND now the time drew nigh for setting out on their journey. It was early in September, and Mr. Mordaunt being advised to proceed by sea voyage for the sake of his wife's health, engaged a large merchant vessel, bound for Marseilles, and soon to sail from Liverpool. The packing days were very bustling ones ; all lessons were interrupted, and Ellen's time was fully occupied in giving a helping hand everywhere ; sometimes willingly, at others with ill-concealed vexation at leaving some more interesting occupation—such as a parting visit to some favourite spot in the garden ; and more than once at having to give up the only half-hour she had secured for some days for reading her chapter. And then the reproof which was sure to follow her sigh of disappointment, would occasion her bitter self-reproach before she laid down her head to sleep. On the day before they set out, Ellen had been banished to the study to keep the children

quiet, till it was time to go with their father for a few farewell visits to some of their poor neighbours. Time had sped on, when presently the door opened, and Mr. Maxwell entered, to claim a packet of books promised him by his friend. He had enquired for them, and had been directed to the study without further explanation, so that he was not prepared for the group who greeted him as he appeared. The children, who were weary of their confinement, sprang forward to meet him, and Ellen with her work in her hand rose; he returned the children's welcome, and held out his hand to her.

"I am afraid I am intruding," he said, "but I was told there was a packet of books here for me."

"Yes," replied Ellen; "papa tied it up for you this morning."

Robert lifted it off one of the empty shelves, and brought it to him; Mr. Maxwell thanked him, and took it, but still he hesitated to go; at last, he said—

"Are you sorry to leave England, Miss Mordaunt, or are you one of those who think new scenes preferable to old familiar ones?"

"Oh, no! I am not one of those persons," said Ellen. "I love my dear home more than I can ever love any other place; but I own I feel great pleasure at the thought of visiting Italy."

"Yes," replied Mr. Maxwell, "there is, I know, a charm in that sunny land; and, besides," he added smiling, "you take home with you."

"Oh, yes," responded Ellen, with a bright look;

"if only Arthur were coming with us, our party would be complete, there would then perhaps be little or no difference between Nice and England, unless indeed we were reminded of it by not freezing in the winter."

Mr. Maxwell looked earnestly at her. "Yes, Miss Mordaunt," he said, "there would be another difference, for which a clearer sky and warmer air could hardly compensate,—the prevalence of a false religion."

Ellen looked up with an expression of interest; Mr. Maxwell observed it, and continued—

"You are no doubt aware that the beautiful land to which you are bound is enslaved by popery."

"Yes," answered Ellen, "so I have heard; but I believe there is a Protestant Church at Nice."

"There is," said Mr. Maxwell; "but it is a very painful thought, that the inhabitants of the land you dwell in are all in a darkness for which you can bring no remedy. Oh, Miss Mordaunt, we never can be sufficiently thankful for the light which shines in our own blessed land. Perhaps your absence may be so far beneficial, that you may return home with increased gratitude; and there are few of us with hearts *so* warm, that they might not with advantage be *warmer*."

"Oh, I am not one of those few," said Ellen, quickly; "I am not grateful at all. I do not know if I ever even thought about it before." The colour rose into her cheeks as she said this. He looked very kindly at her, and said—

"Well, it is a good thing to see our defects. Then you will not regret the journey, or the absence from England, if it brings these truths more to your mind."

"Oh, no! I shall not regret it," said Ellen, turning her eyes to his with ingenuous candour. "I shall be very glad, very thankful, for any thing that makes me think or feel at all."

This unusual expression of her feelings, caused by the general excitement, half startled her—at all events, it brought the tears to her eyes. Had she not turned her head hastily away, she would have seen a similar shining in Mr. Maxwell's. He was silent for a moment, and then, in that peculiarly solemn tone in which he always quoted Scripture, he said—

"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

Ellen made no reply, but the words conveyed a delightful feeling of encouragement, which thrilled through her inmost soul.

Mr. Maxwell continued, "Did you always feel equally glad of any thing to make you think?"

"Oh, no!" said Ellen, "I believe not—only since I heard your sermons."

Just at this moment, Mr. Mordaunt's voice was heard, calling "Children, Ellen, it is time to get ready." Ellen started, and said, "There is papa calling us; he is ready to go out. Annie, Robert, Willie!" Annie and Willie, who had been engaged in a game of romps upon some boxes,

which had been piled up as each was filled, jumped down, rejoicing that their imprisonment was over, and ran out of the room. They were met at the door by old Dinah, a faithful nurse who had been chosen to accompany them on the journey, and who went up stairs with them, calling to master Robert to follow. Robert, however, remained where he had been standing during the whole conversation, with his large grey eyes fixed on Mr. Maxwell's face, and not a single muscle of his countenance moving. The young clergyman turned to go, saying—

“Your papa is going out now, I will call to see him this evening. Good-bye for the present, Miss Mordaunt.” He held out his hand to her, and in a solemn, earnest tone, added, “May the Spirit of Truth Himself guide you into all truth.” Ellen answered not; but her eyes spoke the gratitude she felt. In another moment he was on his way home, and Ellen, with her little brother, went up stairs.

“Where is Mr. Maxwell?” asked Ellen's father, as he met her in the hall ready for their walk.

“He went home,” replied she, “as you were going out; but he said he would call this evening.”

They then all set out, Robert and Willie hand in hand, and Ellen and Annie one on each side of their father. They talked cheerfully as they went along, but Ellen ceased not to hear Mr. Maxwell's parting words ringing in her ears. She kept asking herself, who was the person he alluded to, and how

He could guide her into truth. It occurred to her at last, that the words might be in the Bible, and she determined to seek for them.

The farewells, spoken over and over as they went from cottage to cottage—the touching blessing which followed the offering of the children's little gifts, were too affectionate not to reach the warm and sensitive heart of Mr. Mordaunt. He spoke cheerily indeed to the poor people, and even jestingly, asking them if they expected them all to be buried alive in Italy, that they looked so dismal; but it was with a deep sigh and a quickened step that he turned to go home at last, and they walked back almost in silence.

According to promise, Mr. Maxwell spent the evening with them. He was so very careful not to do anything to give offence, that hitherto he had never proposed conducting family worship; but on this night when, though all were cheerful, there was a certain overflow of the kindly feelings which gave a licence to all to say and do what they pleased, as the hour for separating drew nigh, he said with unaffected simplicity, "Is this your hour for family prayer? Shall we not together seek the Lord's blessing on your journey?"

Of course consent was given, and Mr. Maxwell read, in a deeply solemn voice, the one hundred and twenty-first Psalm; and then kneeling, he turned its language of promise into that of *prayer*, in words so simple, that even the children felt its influence, and understood much of his meaning. Ellen's heart

beat as she heard him offer up what she could not but feel sure was a petition for *her*. For "those weak in the faith, those beginning to run the race, those asking the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, he sought enlightening, guiding, preserving grace." And, then, with evidently a full heart, he mentioned the heads of that household, "might they not only find the health they sought in that far-off land, but prosperity to their souls; and that, finally, each of that company might be found among the blessed when the Lord should 'make up His jewels.' Bring them back," he concluded, "to the home of their fathers, this earthly paradise, if such be Thy will; but above all, conduct them safely over the waves of this changing world, to the haven of everlasting rest."

When they rose from their knees, Mrs. Mordaunt's face was wet with tears; his mention of *her* had gone straight to her warm and softened heart; and she said to him, holding out her hand, "Remember us in your prayers, Joseph, while we are exiles from our home."

"I will, indeed," replied he, fervently. Mr. Mordaunt himself did not speak for some minutes, and then it was in that kind of voice which expresses the desire to hide all emotion. Mr. Maxwell, however, soon took leave, and the family prepared to separate.

"Now, Ellen," said her father, "remember, no sitting up to-night; you will have plenty of calls upon your powers to-morrow."

Ellen threw her arms round him, "Yes, papa; and are you too going to bed?"

"Very soon," answered he, "but I have still something to do; go you to your bed."

Ellen went accordingly; but while she undressed, thought was busy, and unconsciously she paused frequently. The principal feeling in her mind was sadness and discouragement. Bodily fatigue had no doubt much to do with it, but the great cause was this—The disclosure of her own feelings to Mr. Maxwell in the morning had been so involuntary on her part, had arisen so naturally out of the conversation, that she had thought little of the circumstance itself at the time, though much of his parting words. But when she heard him, as she could not doubt, bring her into his prayer so kindly, and express the very things she had so much wanted, but knew not how to ask for herself, the thought came into her mind, and gradually became stronger and stronger, that he would have been such a kind helper and teacher if she had been at home. Now the conversation of the morning recurred with greatly increased power, and her view of her own ignorance became more despairing than ever. What should she do? Read the Bible perhaps more? Yes, but she could not understand it. Pray to be taught? But she did not know how to pray, and what if she remained so ignorant? She should never get to heaven. Well, she would speak to Mr. Maxwell when she came back. But suppose she never came

back? She might die in Italy? Oh, what would she give to stay, how gladly she would relinquish the journey she had anticipated with so much pleasure, that she might remain in England, and learn the way to heaven! The more she thought, the more despairing she became, till, in a kind of paroxysm of distress, she sat down on a low stool to get a little quiet before saying her prayers. "Oh, that I had a teacher, a guide," thought she. As she said this, Mr. Maxwell's words flashed across her mind. "What guide did he mean? I cannot look in my Bible, for I was told not to stay up, but let me think,—perhaps he meant the Holy Spirit; oh, would *He* teach *me*!" This thought solemnised her mind, and she knelt down. When she had repeated her usual form of prayer, she still felt unsatisfied; her wants had not been expressed. She remembered Mr. Maxwell's prayer, and how he had found words so applicable—but he had no book,—might she venture? She hesitated a few moments; but her urgent need overcame her reluctance, and in trembling accents she offered up a petition, that the Spirit of Truth might guide her into *all truth*, for she was a poor ignorant girl, who wanted to know the way to heaven, and had no one to teach her. Half afraid that she had done wrong, she rose hastily from her knees, and in a few minutes was in bed; but a calm spread over her troubled spirit, and she fell asleep.

When the servant called Ellen in the morning, she delivered a message from her father, that he

would be ready for breakfast in half-an-hour. In a great hurry she dressed herself, and just as she knelt for a minute's prayer, under her open window, her father called her. She looked up at the fair sky, and at the well-known trees, whose branches were waving in the wind, and her distress of the night before came back to her. She whispered a few words of prayer, and hurried down stairs. Mrs. Mordaunt looked pale that morning, and her husband tried in vain to cheer her with many affectionate efforts. Ellen was obliged, therefore, for her mother's sake, to hide all sad feelings. At length the carriage, which had been packed at the back of the house, came to the door, and they prepared to start. Mr. Maxwell and Arthur were with them, assisting, for it was settled that they should set off for the parsonage as the carriage drove away. The last words were said, the coach door closed, and they started amid a waving of handkerchiefs from the children, and from Arthur and his tutor, who stood on the steps of the house door.

Ellen's tears fell as they passed through the large gates, till encountering a rather displeased look from her father, she hastily dried them, and continued her thoughts with more self-control. Mrs. Mordaunt had till now been tolerably calm, till a turn of the road brought them within sight of the church, and of the old yew-trees of the churchyard. She looked at it earnestly for a minute, and then bursting into tears, turned her

head away. Their drive to the nearest station was therefore a sad one; but the bustle occasioned by their getting out of their own and into the railway carriage, gave a new turn to their thoughts, and cheerfulness once more prevailed. The children, who had never seen a railway before, were all in amazement. Old Dinah kept imploring Ellen to keep tight hold of master Robert, while she herself held Annie and Willie; for the worthy old woman was greatly alarmed lest some accident should befall them. The unloading of the carriage was at length accomplished, and at the moment when Mr. Mordaunt came up to place them in their seats, the old coachman pressed forward, hat in hand, and a tear on his cheek, to wish a pleasant journey and a speedy return. Mrs. Mordaunt and Ellen held out their hands kindly, and little Willie's sweetest smile was given. Mr. Mordaunt himself wished him so warm a farewell, and Robert and Annie looked so lovingly at him, that he shrunk away, quite overcome.

We will pass by the railway journey, which came to an end when night had closed in, at Liverpool. On their arrival there, Mr. Mordaunt's first care was to see his wife at rest in her bed, and then he ordered tea. As the children sat on either side of the long table, with sweet happy faces, Ellen presiding, no one under their circumstances could have felt sad. Mr. Mordaunt was well pleased at their success hitherto, and his good spirits infused life into the whole party, and induced Ellen more than once to

get up and kiss him with great energy. Little Willy's sunny curls were fairly on the table before tea was completed, being overcome with sleep, and Dinah was summoned, who, taking "her beautiful boy" in her arms, carried him off.

"Ellen," said her father, "you will take Annie to bed—she is to sleep with you." So Ellen marched off with her sister, leaving Robert with his father to wait Dinah's return, and to gaze round the room at all the strange new things. And yet he did not look long at them; he had discovered that from the window a view of the shipping might be obtained; so he slipped from his chair, and pushing back the window-curtain stood in a recess. It was a starlight night, and over the ship's masts a spangled sky was beaming. He could see but little of the boats and shipping, for they were at some distance and it was dark; but his eye went up to that bright sky, and his heart, which was softened and subdued by the events and excitement of the day, went back to the scene he had so often gazed on from his nursery window beneath those very stars, whose well-known clusters seemed like old friends in a strange place. He thought of the expanse of green fields and plantations, varied by tall trees, which he had been used to see, instead of a confused mass of houses and masts; and then he thought of the world above them, till his infant mind was lost in wonder amid the strange creations of his fancy.

"Robert! Robert! where are you?" at length

broke upon his startled ear; and opening the window-curtains with a bewildered look, for he had forgotten where he was, he stood disclosed to view, at the same moment becoming conscious that old Dinah was there, and that his father was calling him in a stern voice.

"There you are; what are you about?" continued his father.

"Looking out of the window, papa," said Robert.

"Out of the window!" cried Dinah.

"Out of the window!" repeated his father; "what do you see there at this time of night, I should like to know? Off to bed with you."

Robert came up to kiss his father, and then followed Dinah, who kept repeating to herself, "Well, he's a strange child, this; he's a rare curiosity."

And so they disappeared, and soon all were in their beds. We leave them there, Robert, to see the visions of his imagination re-appear in his dreams, and Ellen to go over again the parting scene at Mordaunt House, and to fancy she could still hear the fervent "God bless you, Miss Mordaunt!" with which Mr. Maxwell bade her farewell. "Ah!" thought she, "perhaps he will pray for me. I wish I knew how to pray for myself."

CHAPTER VI.

THE VOYAGE.

"Yon sun that sets upon the sea,
 We follow in his flight ;
 Farewell, awhile, to him and thee,
 My native land, good night!"

BYRON.

"WELL, I have some news for you, Mary," said Mr. Mordaunt, as he came in the next day from a visit to the "SEA BIRD," which was to convey them over the waters, "What do you think it is?" continued he, sitting down by her side, and taking her hand. "But mind, it is not settled yet; it wants your deciding voice."

"Now, Edward, have you really paid me the compliment of waiting my decision in anything?" said Mrs. Mordaunt. "Come, tell me what it is."

After exciting his wife's and Ellen's curiosity a little longer, Mr. Mordaunt said, "Well, these are my adventures; or, rather, I will come to the point at once. It seems there arrived here a few days ago, a gentleman, recently left a widower, with his sick and only daughter, seeking a vessel to convey them to Italy—the sea voyage having been recommended for her yet more strongly than for you. He came and found two ships about to sail thither;

one a dirty, very small, and disagreeable affair, with a rough captain ; the other a large, capacious, well-regulated vessel, with a captain superior to the generality. Well, he of course decided on the last ; but to his dismay and grief, poor man, for his daughter is very ill, he found it engaged by a gentleman with a wife, four children, and two servants. He enquired if there was room to admit his sick child—he himself would sleep on deck, or anywhere. Yes, there was room for them both ; but the whole vessel had been engaged, and unless some arrangement could be made with the other gentleman, nothing could be done. The poor man begged the captain to see the gentleman ; it was a matter of great importance to him ; his child's life might depend on it. The feelings of the good captain were touched, and he promised to see and speak to me. He related the whole thing fairly, and as time was precious, I went and called on the gentleman."

"Well!" interrupted Mrs. Mordaunt, "and what is he like?"

"And his daughter—did you see her?" asked Ellen.

"I saw both," replied Mr. Mordaunt ; "the father is evidently a gentleman. He looked very much careworn and very anxious for my decision. I told him exactly how I was situated, and with him went over the accommodation. I find there might well be room if you are not disinclined, and so I told him I would give him an answer to-night,

for this is Friday, and the vessel sails on Sunday morning."

"And is the poor young lady very ill, papa?" asked Ellen.

"She looked fearfully delicate," answered her father, "she seems very young, poor thing,—her manners are extremely prepossessing."

"Well, Edward," said Mrs. Mordaunt, "I must leave the matter to you. You have seen them, and I have not. You know all about travelling, and I know nothing. Poor man! what a sad story; how long has his wife been dead?"

"About six months, I believe," said Mr. Mordaunt. "Well, we will consider it. Ellen, you may go to the children."

Ellen went; and the decision was finally come to, that they should share the "SEA BIRD'S" accommodation with the strangers.

"I forgot to tell you, my love," said Mr. Mordaunt, that evening when it was all settled, "that our new friend is a Scotchman and a clergyman."

"Scotch, is he?" said Mrs. Mordaunt, scarcely heeding the last part of his information, at which Ellen gave an involuntary start. "How do you know?"

"The Captain told me," answered her husband. "That is, he was the first to do so. I should have known both, directly I saw him. This is his name," and he handed her a card.

"The Rev. James Blackburn," read Mrs. Mordaunt. "That's a good name. Well, it is settled

now. We will hope he will prove an agreeable travelling companion."

Rainy weather prevented any one but Mr. Mordaunt seeing the Blackburns during their stay. It just cleared up on Saturday afternoon, in sufficient time for him to get his family safely and comfortably lodged on board. Mr. Blackburn and his daughter did not embark till later, when Mrs. Mordaunt was lying down, and Ellen busied in attending on her, so they did not meet that night. Robert and his father, however, went on deck and saw "the strange gentleman," as the boy characterised him; describing him to Dinah and the two children as very thin and very grave, but with such a kind voice; adding, "And do you know, Annie, I think he loves little children after all." This remark was occasioned by sundry cautions of their mother, not to torment the gentleman they would meet on board; for he was a clergyman, and would not like to be teased by children.

"How do you know?" enquired Annie.

"I cannot tell you how I know," answered Robert, "but I do think so for all that. Wait till you see him, and you'll think so too."

The following morning they sailed. It was Sunday, but Mrs. Mordaunt suffered so much from the motion of the vessel, and they were all so strange and unsettled, that there were neither prayers nor reading in the Mordaunts' cabin. It was not very easy to keep the young ones quiet all day. Mr. Mordaunt took them on deck by turns to

change the scene, and inhale the fresh air, and look on the receding shores of their native land. Ellen being the most useful below, and not difficult to manage, did not get on deck till the afternoon, when her father promised to take her. She longed for the time to come; for having been shut in by the weather during their stay in Liverpool, the whole of the last few days seemed to her like a dream; and a weariness oppressed her, which she accused herself of as *sin*, but which was really occasioned by confinement and bewilderment. At length the time arrived, and she went on deck, when she felt as in a new world. It was a lovely and balmy afternoon; their progress had been steady, and Ellen's heart beat as she saw land at a considerable distance, and the waves around her. There was a delightful exhilaration in the air, and she paced to and fro with her father with a cheerful step.

After some little time, as they passed the stairs which led below, the sound of steps made them turn. It was Mr. Blackburn bringing his daughter on deck. He bent his head courteously on seeing Mr. Mordaunt, but did not speak till his child was on even ground—then he turned and offered his hand. Mr. Mordaunt shook it with his usual friendly manner, and said, turning towards the young lady,

"I am happy to see you here, Miss Blackburn, it is a token you feel already better for the sea air."

"I am much better, thank you," replied she;

"the air was so warm, that I begged my dear father to bring me up. How beautiful it is!" And she looked round with delighted eyes.

"Is this one of your family, sir?" asked Mr. Blackburn, looking kindly at Ellen.

"It is my eldest child," said he: "she is very anxious to make the acquaintance of your daughter."

Miss Blackburn, with a sweet smile, held her hand out to Ellen directly, and said kindly,

"I too am very happy to do so."

Ellen looked up at her as she spoke, with interest. Miss Blackburn was a tall and very fair girl, who without any strict regularity of feature had a very pleasing face. The chief charm of it, however, was a beautiful smile. It was not sad, nor was it merry; but it conveyed invariably the impression of peace of mind. Her deep mourning garments spoke of affliction and sorrow, and yet Jessie Blackburn did not look unhappy. Her eyes often shone with unmistakeable enjoyment, and her voice was remarkably cheerful. So evident was this, that Ellen's first thought was, "Poor thing! how little she knows how ill she is," for the bright hectic spot on her cheeks told a tale of sickness and disease. But Ellen was mistaken, Jessie Blackburn did know her state; nay more, she lived in the full persuasion that her death was at no great distance. But she had learnt to look forward to it without fear, for she was truly a Christian girl. Instructed from her earliest youth in the doctrines of the Gospel, with that precision and clearness so

remarkable in Scotland, she had received the good seed into an honest and good heart, and it was now the all-engrossing thought of her mind, and the light of her soul. She had witnessed the happy death of her beloved mother, but in her grief were mingled none of those ingredients which so often weigh down the Christian's heart. She knew her mother was in glory, and realised to the full her own expectation of following her thither ere long; for Jessie possessed the unspeakable blessing of a clear and satisfactory assurance of her own eternal safety. She derived all the comfort that may be (though so often it is not) received from the more mysterious doctrines of the Bible. She believed them firmly; and in simplicity of heart realised all the consolation they were intended to convey. The tranquillity of spirit she enjoyed left her free to find pleasure and profit from every source that presented itself; she was especially susceptible of the beauties of creation; and as they walked up and down, Ellen's still unsatisfied mind, felt the influence of her companion's quiet enjoyment. They talked on different subjects for some time, till at length the beauty of the western clouds attracted their attention, and they all stood still to admire. Leaning against the vessel's side the two girls stood together, the gentlemen at some little distance talking to the captain.

"What a glorious evening," said Jessie; "how calm, how Sabbath-like. Yes, by land or sea the Lord's-day is ours. Valuable as the outward pri-

vileges are, how delightful it is to feel that we are not absolutely dependent on them. No power on earth could make us forget that this is Sunday." Ellen coloured, she was conscious of having almost entirely forgotten it, and had even allowed herself to do so, as quite lawful under their present circumstances. Her sense of truth impelled her to say, with some embarrassment—

"I had almost forgotten it was Sunday."

Jessie looked at her, and smiled again very kindly, for she traced Ellen's feelings on her face.

"It has indeed been different from the usual course of things. Your mamma too has been suffering so much. You do not seem the worse for the sea?"

"Oh, no!" said Ellen; "I am quite well."

Still she did not look as she had done a few minutes ago. Jessie's words had recalled her to her better self; and she was bitterly reproaching herself with having forgotten the day.

With much interest in her looks, Jessie said, "You miss, I dare say, the public services, if this is the first time you have been deprived of them. Had you the advantage of a pious minister?"

"Yes, we had indeed," said Ellen, warmly; "but he had not been there long before we left. I never liked any clergyman so well."

"Perhaps," said Jessie, "you had only lately learnt to appreciate the preaching of the Word?"

Ellen looked up quickly. How came Miss Blackburn to know this so well?

"Indeed," she answered; "I cannot say that I appreciated Mr. Maxwell's preaching, for I was too ignorant to understand him." A tear started to her eye as she said this.

Jessie took her hand, and said, with her own sweet smile, "My dear child, how glad I am to hear you speak in this way."

"What," said Ellen, "are you glad I should be ignorant?"

"Not glad you should be ignorant, but glad you should feel yourself so. Do you not remember the text, 'Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.' The people of this world talk in that way—they say they have need of nothing; to feel our own ignorance is one of the first steps towards light, knowledge, and salvation."

"Oh, Miss Blackburn," said Ellen, turning her eyes full upon her, "what encouraging words you speak."

"They are not my words," said Jessie, "but His who cannot lie. He says, that He expressly came that those 'who see not might see;' and that 'the poor in spirit are blessed, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'"

A fresh breeze just then springing up, Jessie drew her shawl closer to her, and they walked on. They met the gentlemen coming towards them. "Jessie, my child," said her father, in a voice of the

tenderest affection, "it is too late now for you to remain on deck, I must conduct you below; and to-morrow," he continued, turning to Mr. Mordaunt, "I propose to myself and Jessie, the pleasure of being introduced to Mrs. Mordaunt, should she be well enough."

"Indeed, I hope so," was Mr. Mordaunt's reply; "her illness is, I think, only caused by the novelty of the ship's motion. I will not detain you now," added he, looking at the sweet countenance of Jessie; "these rude sea breezes are not ceremonious, and they will injure this fair flower if we are not careful."

A cordial good-bye was exchanged, and Jessie and her father descended. Ellen and Mr. Mordaunt paced the deck a little while longer, and then they also retired. When Ellen lay down that night in her little bed, one thought filled her mind. It was astonishment that in her travelling companion she had, perhaps, found the very teacher she needed. It may seem as if she had jumped too hastily at this conclusion; and had she been older, or less simple-minded, she might probably have been much longer in arriving at it. But it must be remembered that Ellen was only fifteen, that she had never to her knowledge been thrown into Christian society till she met Mr. Maxwell, that her mind had been almost suddenly awakened to the need of spiritual teaching, and that she had believed herself going out of the reach of it when she bade her English home farewell.

To be thrown into such close contact with another who thought like Mr. Maxwell, one to whom she could say so much that she could never have said to him, was a prospect unspeakably cheering. But would her parents allow her to be much with Jessie Blackburn? Ellen knew very well how particular they were about the persons she associated with, and that they watched her with strict and jealous care; but Miss Blackburn was so pleasing, and then she was sick, poor thing—oh, she herself would be so careful too, and behave so well—in fact, all looked bright to Ellen to-night—how different from that dismal, uncomfortable feeling of the morning.

The next day brought another bright and sunny sky, and Mrs. Mordaunt felt so much better that she came on deck towards afternoon, with Mr. Mordaunt and Ellen. Old Dinah also came up, bringing the children for a little air and amusement. There the introduction took place between Mrs. Mordaunt and their fellow-passengers, and Ellen watched with delight the pleased expression of her mother's face as she talked to Jessie Blackburn. They sat there for some time talking cheerfully. The conversation never very deep or very serious; and yet it was not foolish either, for both Mrs. Mordaunt and Jessie had seen affliction; and although they made no allusion to their losses except in general terms, it gave to both a certain sobriety, and a chastened sympathy with each other. Mr. Mordaunt stood conversing with the captain at some little distance,

but Mr. Blackburn walked up and down in front of them with little Robert's hand in his. The child was looking in his grave yet kind face, and talking to him in his own artless manner. It was evident the boy had struck some chord in Mr. Blackburn's heart, for he seemed to be feeling no small degree of interest in what he was saying. Indeed, this was not to be wondered at, for Robert Mordaunt was a very engaging child. His peculiar disposition had been quite overlooked in his father's house; and though old Dinah did sometimes express wonder at his odd questions and ways, no one understood or appreciated the strong points of character and the originality of mind which he displayed. They thought him unmanageable—he was only so because no one knew how to manage him. Mr. Blackburn looked at that open brow and clear speaking eye, and argued from them a truthful and beauty-loving character; and the unaffected look of distress and sympathy, which passed over the boy's face when Jessie was seized with a fit of coughing, must surely (he thought) betoken a warm, tender, affectionate heart; and such, indeed, was the case. That walk confirmed Mr. Blackburn's opinion of Robert, and he often afterwards requested that he might be allowed to walk and talk with him on the deck.

On their return below, the conversation turned upon their new friends. Mrs. Mordaunt expressed herself extremely pleased with both.

“Yes, I like her very much,” continued she,

"she is a nice lady-like quiet girl. I don't often take fancies to people, but when I do, I am generally right in my opinion of them." Mrs. Mordaunt did not know herself, her character was one of impulse, and her likes and dislikes were generally suddenly taken.

The time passed on, and the whole became more and more attached to one another. Mr. Mordaunt indeed found soon that his new friend was "as great a saint as Joseph Maxwell;" but though this did not weigh in his favour, it did not blind Mr. Mordaunt to the fact, that Mr. Blackburn was a gentlemanly well-informed man, whose conversation was interesting and instructive, and his temper and daily conduct such as to awaken the highest esteem. But, perhaps, the strongest bond of all was, the similarity of their position; both were watching over the dearest object of their affections, and giving up the comforts of home for their benefit. Each, therefore, could calculate on the sympathy of the other, and they did not so calculate in vain. Mrs. Mordaunt grew daily more and more pleased with Jessie; perhaps the secret tie was that large tear which had gathered in her eye, when Mrs. Mordaunt with a mother's tenderness related the beauty and intelligence of her lovely baby, and his early death. But the strongest friendship was that which grew up between the two girls. Jessie soon saw the subject which most interested Ellen, and with delight encouraged her to tell her all her feelings and difficulties. She found her very confused

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upon most of the essential doctrines of the Gospel; but Ellen's heart was in a state to receive the good seed with wonderful rapidity. Without experiencing any great alarms, or very strong feelings of any kind, she took in the truth like a little child. She did, it is true, often stumble at perplexing parts of Scripture, but her joy was great to find that many of these now became clear to her. She took them to her friend, and her sweet ingenuous countenance would brighten as the dark passages gradually became plain to her understanding. "Thank you, I understand it now," she would say; and Jessie, who valued greatly the sincerity of Ellen's character, was satisfied without further expressions. Ellen was not in some respects as demonstrative as many, but yet things she did not seem to notice much at the time, Jessie often found had made their silent way, and her memory was retentive of even casual remarks.

This daily intercourse, for above a month, took great effect. On Sundays, Mr. Blackburn used to hold a short service with the captain and sailors, and on two of these occasions Ellen and her father were present, and had the advantage of hearing simple Scriptural and heartfelt prayers, and the preaching of the pure Gospel. From both these she profited much; and in fact decided progress was made by her during the whole voyage. She herself scarcely knew how much knowledge she had gained, till one day, just before their arrival at Marseilles, she opened her Bible at the sixteenth

of John, and sat down to read. She read on to the verse, "When He, the Spirit of Truth is come," &c., and then she stopped. "I did not know the meaning of this when Mr. Maxwell quoted it," said she to herself, "I *do* now. It is the Holy Spirit who teaches us the meaning of the Bible, and makes us 'wise unto salvation.' He teaches us about Jesus, who called himself 'the Truth.' Yes! now I see why he wished this for me—how kind it was—but why did I not understand him then? Is it possible that I have been guided into *some truth*? Oh, how thankful I ought to be! Yes, I am thankful, and I will try to show it by my behaviour."

CHAPTER VII.

THE ARRIVAL.

"Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward."

Exodus xiv. 15.

AFTER a very prosperous voyage our friends arrived at Marseilles. The invalids had both derived benefit from the sea air, and consequently all were cheerful and encouraged. The whole party had become extremely attached to one another—so much so, that regret mingled with the pleasure they felt on quitting their confined quarters on board the vessel. They were, it is true, to pass the winter in the same place, but their close and hourly contact must then be ended. Yet it must be added, that in the minds of *some*, apart from their personal regret at the separation, this event was contemplated with a certain kind of *desire*.

These were Ellen's father and mother, who perceived the strong influence of Jessie over her. They could not indeed avoid admiring the consistent conduct of their young friend; nor could they doubt her sincerity; but they by no means entered into the evident change wrought in Ellen's tastes and sentiments. Accustomed to see her enthusiastic in any new object of interest for awhile, and



easily influenced by those she loved, they set down her present state to affection for Jessie; and they objected to it greatly, because they saw an increasing likelihood of her new opinions coming in opposition to their own. For the present they contented themselves with only an occasional rebuke; but they hoped, when the immediate influence was removed, the effect would wear away. It must, however, be observed, that Mrs. Mordaunt herself was greatly influenced by Jessie. She was very fond of her, and followed many of her suggestions, just because the strong character and plain good sense of Miss Blackburn gave her a certain hold over a less independent mind. She did not herself know how greatly Jessie's opinion weighed with her; though that opinion was often given casually, and always with unpretending modesty. Yet, Mrs. Mordaunt could not bear to think that she influenced Ellen's religious sentiments, and thus poor Ellen became the subject of much and painful opposition, though for the present it was in a measure hidden.

They only slept a night at Marseilles, as on the following afternoon a steamer was to start for Nice. At four o'clock they embarked in her, with the hope of terminating their voyage early the next morning. The day was one of those lovely October ones, only known in Southern lands, so bright and balmy that not one breath of sharp air was felt—a cloudless sky was stretched over the calm blue waters of the Mediterranean, and the whole party

felt the influence of it. It was the first day since entering this lovely sea, that had been exempt from haze or too cutting breezes, and they were therefore more prepared to feel its beauty.

Mrs. Mordaunt and her husband were seated on deck to enjoy the evening, and the rest were scattered about, walking here and there. Jessie and Ellen were together, sometimes sitting, sometimes walking, but always in deep conversation.

"I think," said Ellen, "I never in my life saw such an evening; if we pass such a winter as this, my dear mamma, and you, dearest Jessie, will be restored to perfect health."

"I hope and believe your dearest mamma will," replied Jessie; "she does not seem to me to have any actual disease; you will, I trust, have the joy of seeing her quite well and strong again."

"But *you*, dearest Jessie," said Ellen, "you do not speak of yourself; you too will get stronger." Jessie smiled. "For myself, dear Ellen, I feel no anxiety; if I should get better, well; if *not*, then it is well too."

Jessie had so seldom alluded to her own health in talking to Ellen, that the latter still believed her friend in ignorance of her own danger. She therefore looked at her in some surprise, and said, "You would not then fear to die?"

"Why should I fear?" asked Jessie. "I believe that, for my Saviour's sake, everlasting life is mine. It is well I do not fear, or it would embitter the few remaining months of my life."

The tears rushed to Ellen's eyes. "Dearest Jessie, how you speak! I did not know you thought yourself so ill."

"Did you think," asked Jessie, "that the person most concerned should be kept in ignorance of what every one else knew? Why should I not know that I am so soon to be admitted into the presence of Him, 'Whom having not seen, I love?' I do not feel any fear; it is gladness to my heart to anticipate that blessed hour. There is but one thought keeps me back"—and here a sad expression came over her hitherto happy face. Ellen followed the direction of her eyes, and saw them fixed on the tall spare figure of her father, who was walking on the opposite side with little Robert. After a minute's silence, she resumed, brushing away the tear that had fallen on her cheek. "It was his wish to try the effect of this change, and I willingly acquiesced in any thing that might add to his happiness and comfort; and," she added, turning to Ellen, and in her former cheerful tone, "if our coming abroad has been of the least spiritual use to any one, I am more than thankful that we came."

Ellen took her hand, and kissed it affectionately. "Dearest Jessie, how can *I* be sufficiently thankful for your having been sent from Scotland? You have been of such use to me, how *shall* I get on when we are separated?"

Jessie felt this a good opportunity for a few words of caution and advice to her young and in-

experienced friend, which she had for some time wished to give her.

"Ellen," she said, "you will have difficulties to contend with, and a character to sustain; it is well we are to be parted, for you must learn to stand alone. And yet not *alone*, for you will have assistance at hand far better than mine; and besides, though our intercourse will not be so close, it will I hope be continued. You are, I suppose, to have the charge of your little sister and brothers?"

"Yes," replied Ellen, "papa has frequently told me so, and that we must work hard to make up for so much lost time."

"Well, dear Ellen," resumed Jessie, "what a responsible duty is before you, the instilling of first principles into their young minds. Do you feel the importance of it?"

"I fear not," answered Ellen; "at home I thought nothing of it; and even now, I confess to not much liking the occupation."

"But you will like it," said Jessie, "if you consider a little what the duty of a teacher is, especially of one to such young children. It is the training their immortal souls for eternity?"

Jessie said these words so solemnly, that Ellen's mind was awed and impressed, and she shrank back from the task she had to accomplish.

"It is not," continued Jessie, "the mere act of communicating knowledge, but of forming the character and the mind, of touching the young and susceptible heart with the *most touching* of all

subjects, the Gospel ; and how interesting this must be when the children are your own dear brothers and sister. Do not, dear Ellen, allow your religion to centre upon yourself ; let others share the influence. I do not mean for you to talk much about your own opinions ; this would be generally out of place in you ; but to let them all *feel*, as well as hear, that you are a Christian."

This advice was peculiarly in season, for Ellen was rather too much disposed, with an eagerness natural to her years, to give forth some of her newly adopted ideas, with the notion that she was fulfilling the injunction to "confess Christ before men," but in reality was only injuring the cause she most wished to support. She felt the truth of Jessie's words, and they sank into her heart ; but as was usual with her, when so convinced, she made no answer, except again kissing her friend's hand.

"Look at that dear boy," said Jessie, alluding to Robert who was standing by Mr. Blackburn, listening with eager attention to an account of the whale fishery, "how he listens, what a mind is speaking in those eyes. My father is so fond of him ; he puts him in mind of a dear brother of mine ;" and again a tear shone in Jessie's eyes. "Ellen," she added, after a pause, "make the most of your brothers and sister while you have them ; seek to win their affection ; you think, perhaps, they cannot fail to love their sister ; very true ; but there should be something more than this ; let them find in you a *friend* as well as a sister ; let

them calculate on your never-wearying kindness; your unvarying patience, your tenderest sympathy; and then, perhaps, you will win them to love your God. Never let the reproach sting your heart in days to come, that you might have done more for their salvation, but that now it is *too late*. I have been severe on you, my dearest Ellen," continued Jessie, on seeing the depressed expression of Ellen's face, "but I was led on to speak, by the warmth of my feelings, and the importance of the subject. Do you think I am seeking to draw away your *own* mind from your Saviour, by these endeavours after the good of *others*?"

"No, dearest Jessie," answered Ellen; "but I fear it will have that effect on me. I am not sure of myself yet, and how can I teach others!"

"In teaching them you will teach yourself," replied Jessie; "do not fear, keep your eye fixed on Him who died for you, and 'run with patience the race that is set before' you. Why do you despond? Do you doubt his power? Look up to that lovely sky; do you see that star? Oh, Ellen, look up from earth to that brilliant planet, and let your heart rise, from me a poor sinful worm, to Him who made it. See another, and another—

'The stars come twinkling one by one
Upon the shady sky,'

as if it were on purpose to cheer *you*. Shall I tell you the lesson they bring to us in this our need? It is this—and yet not *theirs*, but a message from

their *Maker*. 'Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth. Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.' " (Isa. xl. 26—31.)

Ellen listened to this sublime passage with deep attention, and she felt the majesty and power of the Word of God, as far above the words of man, even of her dear friend. They stood silently together in the balmy air, till their respective fathers called them to go down. Mr. Blackburn had purposely left Jessie to talk to her friend. She was well covered, and the breeze quite warm. They all retired early to their berths, except the two gentlemen, who preferred the moonlight on deck to the close atmosphere below.

When Ellen awoke in the morning, the clank-

ing of chains, and the sound of many voices, told her they were in port. She hastened to the cabin window, from whence she saw a good many smaller vessels, and beyond, a rocky hill, on which the rising sun was shining. They were soon all dressed, but were unable to land until the health-officers had visited the steamer. When this ceremony was over, Mr. Mordaunt landed to seek for carriages, and put the luggage on them. Then he returned to fetch the party; and very soon they were all on shore, and driving to the hotel. They turned the corner of that rocky height, which Ellen now saw to be an old fortress, and five minutes more brought them to a large hotel, situated underneath the hill and opposite the blue sea.

CHAPTER VIII.

DIFFICULTIES.

“Thee for our Lord and guide we take,
 For time and for eternity;
 Assured Thou never wilt forsake
 The humble soul that trusts in Thee!”

WE will pass over the two following days. After some search, both families secured comfortable quarters at no great distance from each other: Mr. Mordaunt and family in a large house situated on the side of a hill, with the garden-gate opening to the high road, and a beautiful view of the sea and surrounding country from the windows. Mr. Blackburn and his daughter in a small apartment of a large house, opening on one side to the same high road, and on the other to an orange garden which communicated with the beach. They both went into their houses on the same day. As Jessie took leave of Ellen before getting into the carriage with her father, she whispered in her ear, “Fear not, my dear child! hold fast by the ‘anchor of your soul,’ and yet, while holding, *press forward.*”

Ellen was very much disposed to be cast down, but immediate occupations turned her attention. Their house consisted of three stories, ground-floor,

first, and second. On the ground-floor were the dining-room, school-room, and kitchen ; above this, the drawing-room, Mr. and Mrs. Mordaunt's room, and another ; and higher still were Dinah's and the boys', and Ellen's and her sister's, divided by the passage. As Ellen is the person whose history we are following, we will only describe hers. Her bed was in the back part, and Annie's little couch at one side. In the window stood her table, on which lay her Bible and her work-basket. How Ellen grew to love the view from that window ! Immediately below, was the long sloping walk of the garden terminating in the road ; beyond, stretched that bluest of all seas formed into a wide bay, the left point of which was the rocky promontory of Villa Franca with its lighthouse ; and far away to the right, the long coast of France, with the town of Antibes for its boundary. Nearer were olive-trees on either side, whose dusky hue, at first sight so dull and heavy, became more and more appreciated as winter divested the other trees of their foliage.

The bracing climate of Nice evidently agreed with Mrs. Mordaunt ; and perhaps too, her removal from the vicinity of that little willow-covered grave assisted in restoring her health ; but the care of the children was still committed to Ellen. She had treasured up all Jessie's advice on this subject, and earnestly determined to fulfil it to the utmost. Poor Ellen had, however, yet to learn that often, when "the spirit is willing the flesh is

weak." Her desires were excellent, but not so always her way of putting them in practice. She was still often impatient, and injudicious in her manner of urging what she considered matters of duty. Both Mr. and Mrs. Mordaunt, now that they were removed from the restraint of Mr. Blackburn and his daughter's presence, were much freer in the expression of their opinions, and it was now that Ellen's real trials began. No longer under the immediate influence of Jessie, she became more aware of her own deficiencies, and the blank this occasioned often caused bitterness of spirit, in the fear that after all she had no real religion. Instead of this being the case, perhaps it was now her religion was becoming real. It was now that for her own benefit she read the Bible, sought relief in prayer, and recalled and digested Jessie's instructions. It was now she began to learn the real value of the Gospel, and to feel her own present need of a Saviour to wash out her daily sins, and aid her to overcome them.

On one beautiful Sabbath, early in November, she, with her father, attended the English church for the first time; he had been there before, but Ellen had been prevented from doing so. The English church was a low-roofed and very simply constructed building, very *unlike* a church; the Sardinian government having forbidden all exterior resemblance to one. They entered by a little side-door for foot-comers, and found themselves within a square enclosure, whose walls were lined with

cypress, arbutus, and rose-trees. The whole was extremely simple, but very pleasing; beyond, a tall willow waved its long and still feathery branches over the wall of the burial-ground in which it grew. The inside of the church was in the same unpretending style, and tears of solemn feeling rose to Ellen's eyes, as she read on a plain white tablet over the pulpit, the consecrating words, "Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. xviii. 20. For a few minutes, Ellen realised, as she thought she had never done before, the spiritual presence of the Saviour. The service was jointly conducted by two clergymen. The one who preached was evidently Irish. His text was from Jeremiah l. 5. "They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten."

What a text for Ellen! The preacher was, like most of his countrymen, eloquent; but better still, he preached the pure Gospel. His sermon was addressed to those "*asking the way to Zion*," and Ellen's interest increased as he proceeded, from as she thought describing her *exactly*, to dwell on the *perpetual covenant*. He urged his hearers to *personal dealings* with the Lord; not to rest satisfied with giving their attention to religion, but to give their hearts to Christ Himself; warning them that religion, in its general acceptation, often took the place of Him who is in reality its sum and sub-

stance. "This evening," he continued, "let me entreat you in the solitude of your chambers to come to a distinct understanding between yourselves and your God. Ask yourselves, 'am I willing to be saved by Him in his *own way*? do I deliberately choose Christ as my only Saviour, renouncing all hopes from myself? will I really give up all hopes of happiness from this sinful world, and centre my hopes on Him? am I prepared to obey Him as my king, follow Him as my shepherd, work for Him as my master?' I beseech you to count the cost. Set down your reckonings; on one side place Christ and heaven; on the other, yourself and hell. Can you calculate the difference? If you succeed, you will do what no one yet has been able to accomplish on this side the grave, so tremendous would the results be. Do not evade it by putting off your decision. Remember the sentence on Laodicea, 'I would thou wert cold or hot; so then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.' 'If the Lord be God, then follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.' My dear friends, which will your choice be? By all that is precious in time, by all that is tremendous in eternity, let me conjure you to say with Joshua, 'As for me, *I* will serve the Lord.' 'I will make a perpetual covenant which shall not be forgotten.' Not forgotten! *you* may forget it at times, though the remembrance will again return upon you, and confirm your faith in the hour of darkness; but, oh, remember, there

is *One* who will never for one moment forget it; even He 'Whose promises in Christ are all yea and Amen;' He, who chose you first, or you would never have chosen him."

Deeply impressed, Ellen left the church, her little brother's hand in hers. Mr. Mordaunt began to talk of different things, but her heart was elsewhere while she joined him. Jessie had not been at church from a slight cold; but her father was there, and soon coming up with the Mordaunts, walked on with them. While he talked to Mr. Mordaunt, Ellen walked silently by her father's side; but they soon parted at the garden-gate.

Dinner passed, and Ellen found to her great joy that they were not going to walk that afternoon. Dinah took the children into the garden, and Ellen went to the solitude of her own room. There, seated in the window, she recalled the sermon; and turned to the passage quoted, about *counting* the cost. "I have no hesitation about it," thought she; "there will, I know, be troubles for me if I am a Christian; but if I am not—the alternative is too dreadful to think of. Yes, I choose Christ, for I know He will receive me. I *think* I choose Him. I dare not say, I *do*; but I wish to be His, and to do His will. I wish never to go back to the world and sin. May He give me grace to keep to my intentions."

Though Ellen dared not give to these thoughts the character of a deliberate transaction, she nevertheless felt as if something had taken place. It

gave to her mind what it had much wanted, just what the preacher had called "personal dealings" with the Object of faith. She did not at this time perplex herself with points which perhaps minds of more sensitive and intense feelings are long in getting over. She knew the Lord was able and willing to save. She knew she wanted salvation, and therefore she simply took Him for hers without further cavilling or doubting. Great comfort was the immediate consequence, that lovely Sabbath evening. Not fearing lest her present peace should ever again be disturbed, she descended to the drawing-room, where Mr. and Mrs. Mordaunt were sitting together enjoying the twilight. She went and sat beside her father, who passed his arm affectionately round her. Ellen did not talk, for she was still under the influence of her solitary thoughts, and her father and mother were talking together. Presently, however, sounds of rather boisterous mirth ascended from the room below, and Mr. Mordaunt, withdrawing his arm, said, "Ellen, go down and keep the children quiet till tea time. Tell that young rogue, Robert, I shall bring the stick if he makes so much noise."

Ellen obeyed somewhat reluctantly. She found the three children in the dining room engaged in romping, and she said, "Children, what are you doing; you forget to-day is Sunday."

They looked a little ashamed, and as Ellen sat down, gathered round her.

"We had such a pretty walk, Ellen," said Annie,

"up behind the house into the forest there, and Robert said it made him think of the great woods in North America."

"In North America!" repeated Ellen, "I should not think it very like them; how did Robert know anything about them?"

"Mr. Blackburn told me," replied Robert, with a wise look. "He says, for miles and miles there are nothing but trees; not little short trees like these, but great large ones, with such thick branches that the sun never shines through them. I did not say *this* was like *that*, but when Annie said she should call it a forest, I began to tell her about the real ones. Mr. Blackburn has seen it, so it's all true; and he is going, next time, to tell me about a great fire he once saw among the trees."

All this time Ellen was considering how she might best engage their attention to something profitable; at last she asked Robert if he had not thought the church very pretty.

"Yes, I did," said he decidedly; "but what were those two great pieces of marble for, on each side of the pulpit?"

"Those are the ten commandments," answered Ellen, "the same as we hear read in the church. Do you remember when they were first given?"

"No," answered all the children.

"Then go into the school-room, and fetch me the little old Bible, and I will show you."

The Bible was fetched, and Ellen turned to the nineteenth chapter of Exodus, and told Robert to

read it. He did so accordingly, in a fine clear tone, warming as he proceeded. He had not read far when Mrs. Mordaunt came in to prepare the tea. Robert never moved, but proceeded with that chapter and the next, then he paused.

"Ellen," said he at last, "this is a very wonderful story, but I want to know all about it. Who were these people? and who was Moses?"

Ellen was not yet herself very well acquainted with Old Testament history, and did not feel capable of answering a great many questions, so she said, "They were people whom God was very kind to a long while ago, and Moses was a man who told them what they were to do. We will read the whole story if you like, by degrees, of a morning together."

"Come to tea, children," said Mrs. Mordaunt in no very pleasant tone of voice. They took their seats, and she went to fetch Mr. Mordaunt; but it was some little time before they entered the room together. When tea was over, the children went to bed. Before leaving the tea-table, Mr. Mordaunt said, "Ellen, your mother tells me, you are going to read the Bible with the children. I do not however think you well enough instructed yourself to be entrusted with this duty, and the children are too young to render it necessary. My wish is, therefore, that you defer it for some time longer."

Ellen looked in surprise from her father to her mother.

"I did not say, dear papa, that I meant to read

all the Bible with the children. Robert asked me——

“I beg your pardon, my dear,” said her mother, “I heard you myself tell them, you would read it with them in the morning.”

“Yes, mamma dear, I did say, that we would read that part. It was the giving of the ten commandments, Robert asked me about.”

“I know nothing about that, my dear,” said her father, “but I repeat that I do not wish you to do it yet. I have no doubt, my dear, of your good intentions; but I am a few years older than you, and though not so zealous, perhaps a little wiser.”

“Besides,” said Mrs. Mordaunt, “the Old Testament is not fit for little children to read, they cannot understand it in the least. I can hardly understand it, and, therefore, I always read in the Gospels. I dare say Ellen objects to that, though I should think the life of our Saviour is the fittest for a Christian to read.”

“Dear mamma,” said Ellen, delighted with this admission that she read the Bible at all, “how can you say I should object to it? I am ready to do all you wish. I know I am not able to explain the Bible to any one.”

“Then why did you offer to do so?” said her mother; “you cannot, surely, say one thing and mean another? Some people think children should always be talking of religion and the Bible. For my part, I think they should never be taught what they cannot understand.”

"But they can understand *some* things in it," Ellen ventured to say. "There is a verse which says, 'From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.'"

"There is plenty of time yet," continued Mrs. Mordaunt, not heeding the quotation, "they will learn all that is necessary when they are older."

"Do children of their age never die?" asked Ellen, in a hesitating, yet solemn tone.

Mrs. Mordaunt paused, and looked at her, and Ellen was instantly sorry she had used words which might seem to convey an allusion that would wound her mother's feelings. Her father said, in a sterner voice than usual,

"And what then? your new opinions do not, I suppose, lead you to believe children of their age responsible? I should be very sorry any child of mine adopted so uncharitable and unchristian a notion."

"Dearest papa," said Ellen, with great earnestness, "surely if they can understand right from wrong, they are; and we are responsible if we do not teach them the truth."

"Well, well," said he, "let it rest on my shoulders. I am, as you say, responsible; if they are ignorant I shall answer for it, not they, or you either, Ellen, so make your mind easy, you are only my vicegerent."

The smile which accompanied these words, was a signal for Ellen to get up and kiss him and her

mother, and they went up-stairs. But though she said no more, she thought much of it. A sense of her own deficiency made her half glad she was forbidden to teach the children from the Bible, and then again she reproached herself for this as a proof of idleness and indifference. For Ellen was tormented, as, perhaps, most conscientious persons sometimes are, with the continual fear of having done exactly the reverse of what she ought. In the present case, had she felt unmingled regret, she would have accused herself of vanity and self-confidence. So devious are the workings of the human heart.

CHAPTER IX.

CHRISTMAS AT NICE.

"One army of the living God,
To his command we bow ;
Part of the host have crossed the flood,
And part are crossing now."

By degrees, our friends became more acquainted both with Nice itself, and with the surrounding country. Mr. Mordaunt used to take long walks, sometimes alone, but oftener with Mr. Blackburn, who from long habit required much exercise. Mrs. Mordaunt was a very indifferent walker; she generally limited her excursions to the olive grounds near; but she used often to drive with her husband and her little Willie on the few carriage-roads to be found in Nice. Jessie's favourite walk was the beach; but she often went further on a donkey, which her father hired for her daily use. He used frequently to guide it himself, watching every step the creature took, and conducting it along the smoothest paths. As however her health improved, which it decidedly did, she persuaded him, for her sake, to accompany Mr. Mordaunt on his longer excursions, and then she used to beg the company of Ellen and her little brother and sister. How pleasant this was for Ellen, need not be told.

She treasured up all the hard texts she met with, all the difficulties which seemed to her insurmountable, for these delightful walks. And soon there were few spots in the vicinity of Nice, which were not associated with some interesting subject of conversation. Beneath one grassy slope, she confessed some sinful action which disturbed her peace. On the high road, by the torrent's side, which led to the old chateau of St. André, some text was explained. Under yonder clump of fine old olives, a difficulty in doctrinal truth vanished for ever. The pine-topped hill seemed ever to resound with Jessie's voice, uplifted in a sweet Scottish hymn of praise; and the shades of Cimié were replete with memories of the simple narratives of her early years. These walks were scarcely interrupted as winter advanced, for in that lovely climate, it is divested of more than half its roughness, and this season was remarkably mild and fine. They generally ended their rambles with a turn on the beach, where Jessie would often alight from her donkey, and finish her walk on foot.

Mr. Blackburn's love for little Robert had greatly increased. He saw and pitied the position of Ellen in her family, though she had never spoken a word to him about either that or any of her own feelings; but Jessie had no secrets from her father, and together they had often conversed about their friends, and tried to devise some means of usefulness for those dear children, so deplorably ignorant of all that concerned their eternal welfare. One day,

accordingly, Mr. Blackburn requested Mr. Mordaunt to send him Robert for a few hours every morning; when he would read with him, and give him some elementary lessons. Mr. Mordaunt thanked him cordially, for he saw the advantage of such an arrangement. "I had been thinking of taking him in hand myself," said he, "but I really do not know how to refuse your kind offer. The child is quick, I think, and, moreover, enthusiastic in his love for you; but he is full of troublesome tricks, I forewarn you, my dear sir."

"I have studied his character for some time, and I think him a very promising boy; besides, you will confer a real favour on me, for I am not used to such an idle life, and teaching is an employment of which I am very fond, and have long been accustomed to.'

The matter was settled, and Robert's joy knew no bounds.

"What wonderful things I shall hear," said he, in his solemn way, while the colour mounted to his cheeks.

"But, Robert," said his mother, "you forget that you will have lessons to do. It will not be all play-work."

"No, mamma, I know that," answered he; "but Mr. Blackburn told me that once upon a time he used to teach some little boys and girls, far away where the black people live, and that at first they used to be very idle and naughty; but that he promised them a story whenever they had

been attentive, and that they very seldom lost their story; perhaps he'll do that to me."

"Mind what your're after, Robert," said his father, "or perhaps you'll hear of the cane he used to thrash the little blackies with, as well as the stories."

"Now, Edward," said Mrs. Mordaunt, "can you fancy Mr. Blackburn using the cane to any one?"

"Perfectly well, my dear," replied Mr. Mordaunt; "and perfectly right too, of him. I shall make a particular request to him to do so to our Robert, if he plays any tricks."

Robert smiled, and drew himself up. "I shall not want the cane," he said, and turned away towards the window.

Ellen's heart made a bound as she heard this arrangement. It was not so much from an appreciation of the value of the plan itself, and the lasting use it might be to her brother, as from the delightful thought that the hand of Providence was in it, and that perhaps it was an answer to her prayers that the children might be instructed. It greatly increased her own desires to teach Annie and Willie, and after pondering upon the subject, she hit upon an expedient. "On Christmas-day," thought she, "I will ask for this favour;" and after this, she found herself continually devising plans as to the manner of asking her request.

Christmas approached in all the splendour of a Southern clime; how different from their English

winter-scenes ! It was certainly cold, and they stood in need of their warm garments to keep off the fresh, exhilarating wind ; but snow and rain were not seen at this joyous season, and earth, sky, and sea alike seemed to rejoice.

"We must have you with us, Miss Blackburn," said Mr. Mordaunt one day, "you must join our family party on Christmas-day. Come, you are not going to refuse us, my dear sir," added he, as he saw a shadow pass over Mr. Blackburn's face, "we shall be all by ourselves, and it will greatly enhance our pleasure, if you will make part of our little circle."

Mr. Blackburn, who had been walking up and down the room, stopped opposite his daughter.

"Jessie, my love," said he, "do you feel equal to it? you shall decide the question."

The eager looks of the children all turned towards Jessie, and little Willie went and stood close to her knee.

"I am very well, my dear father," replied she, "and I think, if you are so disposed, it would be very pleasant."

"Then," said Mr. Blackburn, turning to Mr. Mordaunt, and holding out his hand, "I accept your kind invitation, sir ; I feel greatly obliged to you for the attention ; it is our dinner hour now, so for the present I will wish you good-morning ;" and in a few minutes they were on their way home.

Mr. Mordaunt stood silent by the fire after they

were gone ; indeed, universal silence prevailed, till at length, Mrs. Mordaunt broke it by saying—

“ I do not think you have done a very kind thing, Edward, in pressing poor Mr. Blackburn to join our Christmas party. He looked half unwilling. I fancy these anniversaries are but sad days for him.”

“ I think so too,” said Ellen, “ for I have heard Jessie speak of the happy Christmas holidays they used all to spend together, when her brothers came home from school.”

“ She has lost one brother, I think ?” said Mrs. Mordaunt.

“ Yes, mamma,” replied Ellen, “ I believe he met his death in some sudden way, for Jessie has made several allusions to some dreadful event. That is the brother, of whom Robert puts them so much in mind. She has one more, and he is a clergyman.”

“ Poor girl,” said Mrs. Mordaunt in a very sympathising tone, “ no wonder they feel sad at these seasons ; I am sure they would much rather have been at home ; why did you press them so earnestly, Edward ? ”

“ My dear Mary,” replied he, “ the reasons you give for my not asking them are precisely those which made me do it. It is much better for them both to join a little party like ours, than to be alone together, retracing past scenes. Miss Blackburn had the good sense to be of my opinion, you saw how immediately she assented. Depend upon it,

they will be far better here than at home on Christmas-day.

Among the strangers at Nice, Mr. Blackburn had had the pleasure of meeting a former friend of his, who, with his family, was passing the winter there for the benefit of his wife's health. Their party consisted of himself, his wife and sister, and four children. The younger part of the family had become acquainted with Ellen and her little sister and brothers, during their walks on the beach, (that rendezvous for English nurses and children) when returning from their country walks with Jessie Blackburn. They were well brought up, and very nicely behaved, and proved desirable companions for the younger Mordaunts. Before long, Mr. Mordaunt, feeling it awkward for his children to be on friendly terms with a family he was not acquainted with, sought an introduction through Mr. Blackburn, which was very soon effected, and visits were exchanged. As neither family mixed in general society, the Mordaunts from ill health and domestic habits, the Clintons from religious scruples, intercourse was generally held on the English walk, as the beach is called. However, during the week before Christmas, an invitation came for the young Mordaunts to spend new year's day with the little Clintons. Mr. and Mrs. Mordaunt were asked to join the elder portion of the company, but Mrs. Mordaunt positively refused to go out. The children however were made quite happy by their father promising to take them, and Ellen was

no less pleased, for she knew Mr. Blackburn and Jessie were to be there; and she lived such a quiet life, that it was quite an event to dine out.

On Christmas morning, Ellen was awakened to consciousness by the pealing bells of a country church not far distant. They brought back to her mind the Christmas bells she had so often heard in England, and when she found herself thinking how delightful it would be to hear such sounds in a Protestant land, she suddenly recalled to mind what Mr. Maxwell had said about the effect of a residence abroad.

“His words have come true,” thought she, “I hardly understood him then. Last Christmas-day I heard the village bells ring, and though I thought them very pleasant and joyful, I did not feel thankful for anything. But it is not coming abroad alone that has made the change. Can that verse apply to me, ‘Old things are passed away, behold all things are become new?’ I fear not, and yet certainly I see things now very differently to what I once did.”

Engaged in thoughts like these, Ellen dressed not very expeditiously as may be believed, for she paused every now and then, to look out of the window. The weather was bright and very clear, but cold; the sun was just rising behind a high hill to the left, so that the old chateau or fortress Ellen had seen on her first arrival, being situated below the eastern hill, was still in a dark shade. As the orb of day rose higher and higher, the shadows dispersed, and all was light and sunshine; Ellen stood

and gazed, her thoughts flew back to that morning, when a better and a brighter sun arose, "to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death," and kneeling down she offered up her prayers, that this glorious light might shine on her. The words of a hymn which at Jessie's suggestion she had lately learnt, rose to her lips, as she felt perplexed by doubts as to her own share hitherto in spiritual enlightenment; and she said,

"Lord, decide the doubtful case!
Thou who art thy people's sun,
Shine upon the work of grace,
If it be indeed begun!"

She was still kneeling when she heard the breakfast bell; and she rose hastily, reproaching herself with having shortened her time for prayer, by so many pauses in her dressing.

Her father's face was beaming with kindness; indeed, every person and thing seemed adorned with Christmas smiles—with that peculiar cheerfulness which seems a necessary part of this joyous season, even when its real import is not kept in view. The whole party went to church, which to the delight of the children was plentifully dressed in evergreen robes. The service and sermon were very appropriate, and kindled Ellen's heart into a warm and thankful glow.

The dinner was at an earlier hour than the children might be able to join them. Cheerfulness characterised it; for neither Jessie nor her father were so wrapped in their own remembrances as to

be unable to enter into the enjoyment of others; and he must have had a cold heart that could resist the kind and smiling faces of that little band.

"Thank you, Mr. Blackburn," said Mr. Mordaunt, as his friend, with much feeling, drank the health of the family, and offered his warmest wishes. He had it on his lips to propose the health of his absent boy, but he checked himself, and refrained from doing so lest he should awaken sad memories in the minds of his guests. Mr. Blackburn, however, continued in the same kindly tone, "I meant to include your eldest son, Mr. Mordaunt, when I used the word family. I presume this is his first Christmas spent in absence from his parents. May it be his last for many years to come. I wish him health and prosperity, and better blessings than this world can bestow."

Tears of affection for her boy, and of grateful feeling towards Mr. Blackburn, filled Mrs. Mordaunt's eyes, and her husband said—

"I thank you, my good friend, for your kind thought of my boy, for I know you to be sincere. Painful as this separation has been, it appears to be of great service to him. His tutor seems to have gained a wonderful influence over him; how he has managed, I cannot say."

"You have, then, continued good accounts of him?" said Jessie to Mrs. Mordaunt.

"Oh, yes," replied Mrs. Mordaunt, "excellent. He writes of Joseph Maxwell and his young wife, as if they were a second father and mother to him;

and it is very plain by his hand-writing and the style of his letters, that he is greatly improved."

Dinner being over, they left the table, and Mr. Mordaunt proposed a walk with Mr. Blackburn and the children, adding—

"I suppose Ellen will beg to be left behind as Miss Blackburn is here. Well, you may do as you please to-day."

Ellen threw her arms round his neck, "My darling papa, how good you are. I *should* like to stay with Jessie." And Mr. Blackburn and Mr. Mordaunt left the room to wait for the children in the garden.

As soon as Mrs. Mordaunt was alone with her young friend and Ellen, she led her to the sofa, and after vainly entreating her to lie down, she sat down by her side (Ellen seating herself on a low stool on the other side of Jessie), and took her hand.

"Well, my dear Jessie," she said, "I look upon this visit as very kind, for I am sure you would rather have been at home."

Jessie looked at her in some surprise, but she soon guessed Mrs. Mordaunt's meaning, and she replied—

"Thank you, my dear Mrs. Mordaunt, but I cannot say I would rather not have been here; for my father's sake, especially, I was glad to come; he has been pleased and cheerful here, among us all; whereas alone with me, he would naturally have recalled the past, and sighed over our dimi-

nished number. But you must not imagine," she continued with her own sweet smile, "that such recollections are altogether sad. They are mingled with so much of that which *alone* makes life a blessing, that except at these anniversaries, when the earthly part feels separation though only *for a season* more keenly than usual, it is delightful to dwell upon them."

Mrs. Mordaunt looked up at Jessie's sweet, cheerful countenance, and sighing said—

"I do not agree with you, or feel like you, Jessie; my afflictions have not been so great as yours, and yet I shrink from the very thought of them. Memories of the past, sometimes, almost bear me down."

"My dear Mrs. Mordaunt," said Jessie, "why should we banish from our minds all thoughts of those who once made our home so happy? Besides, is it not like an infringement of the command, not to 'faint,' when 'rebuked of the Lord?' It would go sorely to my heart, if I did not cherish the remembrance of my beloved mother, and my dear brother; nor could I be so selfish as to wish them back."

"Your brother?" repeated Mrs. Mordaunt, "you have one living still, I think?"

"Yes," answered Jessie, "my brother James is in the ministry, in his own country, actively and usefully employed; and my brother Martyn is in heaven. It is Martyn, that your dear child Robert reminds us of so much, Mrs. Mordaunt, and if you

knew how much my father loved that boy, you would not wonder at his attachment to yours."

"Is it long since you lost him?" asked Mrs. Mordaunt. "About four years," replied Jessie; "would you like to hear about it?"

"If it would not distress you, dear Jessie," answered Mrs. Mordaunt, "I should be greatly interested in the account."

"Oh, no! it will not distress me," answered Jessie, "if it does not weary you, I shall like much to go over the bad, and yet joyful, particulars. I delight in speaking of my brother Martyn. He was the youngest of our family, and was always a very promising boy. My dear mother took great pains with him, and his quick memory retained every thing he learnt. At a very early age he could repeat many chapters in the Bible, and numbers of beautiful hymns, and he was bright and intelligent in other studies also; but though his head was well stored, he was so reserved in speaking of his own feelings, that my parents could not be certain whether or not the truths he had learnt had sunk into his heart. This was the great subject of their thoughts and anxieties, but they sought in vain to discover his state of mind. Amiable and obedient, there was little in his conduct to find fault with. A sudden flush on his fair cheek seemed occasionally to betray a quick temper, but it seldom proceeded further; and his affection for us all made him especially dear and precious to us.

My father had long been accustomed to take him with him to the Sabbath-school, but he would not let Martyn take a class, though much needing assistance, until he was twelve years old, from his anxiety respecting the state of his heart, and uncertainty as to his fitness to teach others.

When, however, after much conversation and counsel, Martyn was admitted as a teacher, he showed extreme aptness for the duty, and the pleasure he took in it was plainly seen. He did not indeed talk much about it, but his punctual attendance, and his earnest solemn way of speaking to the children, manifested his own interest in the work.

I must tell you that my father's parish is in a very remote and mountainous situation, where, before he was appointed, there had been no regular Sabbath-school. The church was in a somewhat ruinous condition; indeed, the exterior never lost its ancient ivy-covered appearance. My father very soon collected as many as possible of the children there for instruction every Lord's-day; but the position of the church rendered it difficult for those in the more distant parts of the parish to attend. For some time it was the only school that could be formed, and my father grieved over the many children who were obliged to be left in comparative ignorance. My eldest brother James, who had been for several years a decided and zealous servant of God, determined to try and remedy the evil. He searched for some time, and at last prevailed on

an aged couple to let him make use of an old barn near their cottage. In this he assembled as many children as he could collect on Sunday evenings, and to instruct them became the delight of his heart. But at length the time came for James to enter college, and study as a candidate for the ministry, and what was he to do with his school? An unlooked for circumstance had made his departure sudden, and his scholars were unprovided for.

Martyn was then fourteen, and as reserved about himself as ever; but still James was sure he could trust him, and one evening he proposed to him that he should take charge of his beloved school. I shall never forget the effect of this proposition on Martyn; the colour rushed to his cheek, and then left it ashy pale; at last he said, "You have offered me a very responsible office, my dear brother; I cannot decide now; will you give me till to-morrow evening?" Of course the delay was granted. Martyn retired early to his room, and I remember seeing him the next morning when I got up, returning from the hills, with a pensive, and yet very tranquil expression, on his fair young face. All day he was thoughtful; but when evening came he was not there.

"Where is Martyn?" said my father. As he said the words, the door opened and he entered. He walked up to the table where my father and James were sitting, and said in a voice that was not quite steady, while the colour came and went in his cheek, "My dear father, my dear brother,

I am not worthy to fill the office you propose to me. Is there no other person who could take it?" and he lifted up his clear eye to them both.

"None," replied James. "I have considered the matter well, and if you do not take it, my school must be dispersed 'as sheep not having a shepherd.'"

"Then," said Martyn, "if my father approves, I will undertake it;" then advancing a step further, he continued—"I am but a little boy, I know, and deficient in spiritual knowledge; but I have asked the guidance of God, last night in my own room, and this morning and this evening among his own heathy mountains and lonely crags; and I believe that He has heard me, and will help me to be a conscientious and faithful teacher." The unaffected modesty with which he said this, and the dignity of his youthful figure, I cannot describe to you. My father and James looked at him, but could not speak. My dear mother, however, got up from her seat, and went towards him, saying, "My child, my Martyn, you *have* then given your heart to the Lord? you have chosen the better part?"

Martyn turned to her, "Yes, my dear mother," replied he, throwing his arms round her, "forgive me if I have been too reserved before. I felt afraid to tell any one, for fear they should think me better than I am; but you will believe that it is just because I feel myself such a wretched sinner, that I want the Lord Jesus to save me." More

was not needed ; my parents' tears fell as they embraced their child, dearer now than ever. He told us, however, how some time before, more than two years, he had been led to question the reality of his religion, and finding it merely the *habit* of a Christian education, in alarm he had been driven to his Bible and his knees, and had said in the language of the patriarch, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me;" and how the answer to *him*, had been similiar to that given to Jacob—"And he blessed him *there*,"—there, among the wild and barren crags of our Scottish hills. He told us too how useful he had found his knowledge of Scripture and hymns ; that passages had come over his memory just when he had needed them ; that these remembered verses had instructed and comforted him even more than those he read and studied. I need not say, that James unhesitatingly left his little flock in his brother's hands.

At some little distance from James' school there is, what we in Scotland call a *burn*, that is, a kind of mountain torrent, which, when swelled by the rain, increases and runs down with great speed. In dry weather this is shallow enough to be crossed with slippery stones.

When Martyn became the teacher, he used in his rambles to visit the cottages on the other side of the burn, and try to persuade the boys to come ; and the sweet simplicity of his manners, though he was so young, won many an idler to the Sabbath-school.

There was one poor lad who was lame, and whose wistful looks caught Martyn's attention. He enquired, and finally arranged that, if some one would bring him to the school, and come as far as the burn to meet him, he would walk back with him so far after school was over; and he punctually kept his engagement. And how that lad loved him! indeed, so did they all.

My father once went in, unseen; and I shall never forget his tears of joy when he returned and described to us the touching scene. One so young commanding the attention of that group of boys, many bigger than himself, and some wild mountain lads. But I am trying your patience too far; forgive me, dear friends, if I have delayed the sad and awfully sudden conclusion; nay, do not stop me—I *can*, I *wish* to continue. One evening the weather looked dark and threatening, and when my brother and his charge arrived at the burn side, there was more water in it than usual, thus proving that rain had fallen in the hills. But the woman who usually came to fetch poor Walter was not there. What was to be done? Leave the poor lame boy to cross the ford by himself, over those slippery stones? Impossible! and Martyn carefully led him over, and went with him to the very door of his cottage. The lad has since told us all that passed. When there, they enquired the reason of the woman's absence, and learnt that she had been called to nurse a sick neighbour, and trusted to some one's kindness to bring Walter home. The

boy asked my brother to go in and rest himself; but Martyn pointed to the sky, and said, "Those dark clouds will alarm my mother if I do not hasten back—how grand, how magnificent they look!" and then in a solemn tone he recited that beautiful hymn,

"God moves in a mysterious way," &c.

When he came to the third verse—

"Ye fearful saints fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread,
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head,"—

he paused; and turning to the lame boy, said, "I leave that with you, Walter; do not be cast down; mind that verse to-night, and remember there will be no clouds, no night in heaven."

"Please God to bring us there, master," replied Walter.

"Amen," said Martyn, lifting his cap from his head, adding fervently, "through Jesus Christ our Saviour." And with a parting smile he set off on his return.

Here Jessie's voice faltered, and she brushed away a tear. Then she resumed, "We could never tell exactly what followed; but it is supposed he found the burn too much swollen to attempt the stones, and tossing his cloak to the other side, tried to swim across. But the current was too strong for him, and carried him down. A cry of distress was heard by one of his scholars, who,

with his father, came running out of their cottage to see. They distinguished something struggling with the water, and hurried down to the brink. The father, as soon as he was sufficiently near, sprang in, and at the risk of his own life, dragged him to the opposite shore, not far from the school-room. He was carried in and laid on the large table, and his father was sent for; but life was gone. My father, receiving a mysterious summons to a sick person, went, little imagining what awaited him. You must picture that moment to yourselves, dear friends, I cannot describe it." Again she paused, and then continued, "Many of the scholars gathered in the room, and in terror, bewilderment, and grief, stood gazing on that form, beautiful in death. The first paroxysm over, my father looked round, and seeing the impression already made upon that young assembly, he calmly bade them draw near, and told them how confident he felt that the soul of his child was safe in glory—not from his many amiable qualities and lovely disposition, but because, like a wretched sinner, he had asked the Lord Jesus to save him, quoting his own words on that memorable night; and we had reason to believe that my beloved brother's death proved the means of life to more than one of his scholars, so that we could rejoice in our sorrow. Such, my dear Mrs. Mordaunt, is my sad, and yet joyful account. Tell me, could I wish that precious boy back? He dwells in the land where no clouds, no night can come; and if his

career was so soon ended, may we not say, he was 'taken away from the evil to come?'"

Mrs. Mordaunt's tears fell fast during Jessie's recital. "Dear Jessie," said she, when she had concluded, "what a touching story you have told us; what a sweet boy he was, and so young, too! Too good for this world; he deserved to be taken to a better."

"My dearest Mrs. Mordaunt, what do you say?" said Jessie; "you forget his own description of himself—'*a wretched sinner*.' The best of us can only say the same; there was but one who was too good for this world—the holy Saviour."

Mrs. Mordaunt made no reply. Ellen's eyes were fixed on her mother's face, while she leant over Jessie's knee; but she did not speak.

"And now," said Jessie, after a silence of a few minutes, "do not let us be sad; come with me, and I will sing you a beautiful hymn my brother loved, and which was sung in his school-room by the boys the day he was buried."

She went to the piano, and began to sing the Scotch paraphrase,

"How bright those glorious spirits shine," &c.

At first, her voice trembled a little; but before she ended, its tones became almost triumphant, and Ellen thought she could read in her eyes the joy of anticipation, the blessed prospect of herself soon joining that ransomed host.

Just as they concluded, the walking party re-

turned. It was dusk, and the subdued expression of their faces could not be seen. Jessie's warm greeting and cheerful voice soon dispelled the weight which her recital had laid on Ellen's heart, and on her mother's, and the evening was spent in pleasant converse. When Ellen went to-bed that night, her thoughts recurred to Jessie's story so powerfully, that she could not sleep; but one other thought was there also, of a more personally distressing nature, inasmuch as it disturbed her conscience. She had had no opportunity of making her request about teaching the Bible. Had it been her own fault? Perhaps she might have been able, if she had really tried. How wrong she had been. Now, when would another opportunity occur? But could she have done it? They had been occupied all day, and she had never been alone with her mother. Well, now she could not help it; she would seek forgiveness; and the very first time she could, she would make her request.

CHAPTER X.

THE NEW-YEAR'S PARTY.

“ Childhood’s happy voices,
Bid them not be still ;
While the heart rejoices,
Let its raptures peal.”

THE last day of the year was rather stormy ; a cold north-east wind blew, and dark clouds flitted across the wintry sky. The children stood at the window watching the weather, with many eager wishes that it “ might only not rain to-morrow.” Towards evening it cleared up, and Ellen had the pleasure of a walk on the beach with her father before the day closed. There were a good many, who, like themselves, had seized the opportunity to enjoy the fine evening ; and the English walk presented a lively scene. Nurses were seen with little children, wrapped up in warm cloaks, and running about, calling to one another with merry voices. Gentlemen and ladies were walking at a brisk rate, and chatting cheerfully together ; and here and there a solitary individual might be seen pacing up and down the driest parts of that beaten road, pausing as he reached the little stream with

the plank-bridge, to look at the last glories of the west, and then turning round to retrace his steps.

The setting sun gleamed through a barrier of grey, misty-looking clouds; Ellen felt solemnised as she saw it sink behind the blue Estrelles, by the recollection that the last sun of another year had gone down; and she thought of Jessie, and wondered how many more she would see.

Mr. Clinton and his sister had joined them for some little time. The former was talking to Mr. Mordaunt, and Miss Clinton was on the other side of him. During their second turn, however, she came round to Ellen's side. She was a very plain, peculiar looking person, above the middle age, with features far from regular or good in themselves; and yet there was that about Miss Clinton which was irresistibly pleasing. She had a strong Irish accent, and a merry twinkle in her small grey eyes. The love of drollery, peculiar to her country, was usually apparent in her language, and in the expression of her countenance; but there flowed through it all a train of deep feeling, and that romance which,—though when exaggerated it constitutes one of the most foolish—when genuine, produces the finest and purest characters. But added to her natural good qualities, Miss Clinton was a sincere and ardent Christian; it was this which chastened her mirth, and sanctified every action of her life; it was this which amid her liveliest sallies kept her from the least approach to levity, and expanded her natural benevolence into Christian love. Truly did she



“rejoice with them that did rejoice, and weep with them that wept.”

It was when she saw Ellen walking in silence that she kindly crossed to her side, and seeing her eyes fixed on the glowing west, she said—

“We should not see the sun bid such a farewell to the old year in our own country, Miss Mordaunt. The poor folks who are looking at a weeping sky to-night would envy us our present prospect.”

Ellen’s thoughts had been solemn ones, and the kind of unrealised consciousness that Miss Clinton was a true Christian prevented her from dispelling them as she usually did, when addressed by any one but Jessie. She replied in a pensive tone—

“It is *indeed* beautiful. Does it not seem as if this evening were different from all others? To-night we are in the old year; to-morrow in the new.”

Miss Clinton smiled, “I remember feeling the same when I was young, a great many years ago. Now, I am an old woman, but I agree with you, my dear, that this night is different from all others.”

Ellen looked enquiringly at her, but said nothing.

Miss Clinton responded to her look and said—

“It is a night when we have much to think of; past years of mercy, and unnumbered blessings; and an unknown future to trust in our Father’s hands.”

“Yes,” said Ellen, mournfully; “and should

we not think also of our sins, in years that are past?"

Miss Clinton looked very kindly at her. "Yes, my dear child," she said, "I am glad to hear you speak so. Yes, we have all much to be ashamed of; but you must not forget that 'As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.'" And as she said it, she turned, first to the one side of the heavens, and then to the other.

And now it was that the sun had reached the top of the blue and distant hills; he seemed to rest on them ere he descended, and to dart forth his rays with redoubled glory, as if to bid adieu to the departing year; and then he sank gradually behind the horizon. It was too beautiful to be viewed save in silence, but when he had quite disappeared, and only left the reflection of his glory on the sea and the opposite hills, Miss Clinton exclaimed, "If *this* is so beautiful, what must it be to *see Him as He is?* My dear young friend," said she, turning round to Ellen, "may you and I be partakers in that glory!"

Ellen took her offered hand with feelings strongly akin to affection, and she thought in her heart, "How precious the kind wishes of Christian people are! how different from those of other persons!" Who the *other persons* were, Ellen did not stop to ask; and it was well she did not, or she would have reproached herself all the evening for undutiful thoughts.

The sun rose in glory the next day, causing

unmeasured joy to the children, and scarcely less to Ellen. The happy moment at last came, and they set off for Mr. Clinton's.

The house they were going to, was in a little lane which turned off from the public road, some considerable way nearer the town than either of our other friends. They rang at a green door which led into the garden, over the wall of which a willow hung its leafless boughs, and not far off, a fine palm tree reared its head.

"What is that tree, papa?" asked Annie; "not this one. I know this is a willow, like that which grows near—which grows in church-yards—but that one with those great branches like long arms, papa?"

"That is a palm tree," said her father.

"A palm tree! oh, let me look!" said Robert; "oh, how glad I am to see it! That is the tree which grows in the desert, Annie, and looks so green when every thing else is burnt up; you don't know why, I dare say, for I couldn't guess it—there's a spring of water underneath, that keeps it fresh. How beautiful the twelve palm trees must have looked, when the poor—"

Robert's enthusiasm was cut short by the door opening, and they entered. They crossed the garden, and were shown up into the drawing-room. There Mr. and Mrs. Clinton received them with a frank cordiality, and sent for the children. It was not long before Jessie and her father arrived, and then a few other friends, whose children were to

join the merry group. Miss Clinton was looking after some of the good things for the feast, and did not come in directly. When she did, every one welcomed her, and on every one her sunny smiles rested, though the sunniest of all was for the little children.

The dinner passed pleasantly, and though the party was large, requiring two tables, it was not so long as might be imagined. When it was over, Mr. Clinton proposed, while day-light lasted, taking the children into the garden. Little Margaret Clinton ran to her aunt.

"Dear aunt Elizabeth, do come with us into the garden, we are all going?"

"Surely, my love," was the kind reply, and soon they were scampering about in all directions. Robert found an opportunity to steal away to his palm tree; and there, after some search, they found him gazing, with eyes and mouth open, to the great amusement of Miss Clinton, who was the first to discover him, and stood, pointing to him, and laughing with all her might.

"Look at the boy," she said, "staring for all the world as if he saw a monkey in the tree. Now, tell me, my man, what you see there to look at?" Robert turned his large eyes on her with the gravest possible face, and said,

"Isn't it a palm tree, *that*?"

"Yes, to be sure it is; and it is the first time you have seen one, is that it? Well then, I am not surprised, for certainly it is no common tree—and

sends us off to the Land of Promise, and the Scripture stories. Can you tell me, which was called the City of Palm Trees in that country ? ”

“ Jericho,” answered Robert, without hesitation.

“ That’s a brave boy,” said Miss Clinton, patting his head.

“ Mr. Blackburn told me, ma’am,” said the boy, colouring a little at her praises, “ or I shouldn’t have known it.”

“ That’s right, my child,” said Miss Clinton, “ always speak the exact truth.”

“ Mr. Blackburn has been very kind to him,” said Mr. Mordaunt ; “ he has him every day at his own house, and really, I am quite surprised how he has managed to teach such an unruly young rogue.”

“ Ah ! that is just like good Mr. Blackburn,” said Miss Clinton, “ he is so fond of little children. But now shall we go in, my dear brother ? ” addressing Mr. Clinton, “ the dew is beginning to fall.”

They went in accordingly. A large room down stairs had been cleared, and by-and-bye, the whole party were more or less engaged in blind-man’s-buff, hunt-the-slipper, &c. Tea formed a small interruption, and afterwards, some of the elder part of the company retreated to the drawing-room, amongst whom were Mrs. Clinton, Mr. Blackburn, and Mr. Mordaunt. Miss Clinton followed them to aid her delicate sister in entertaining her friends. Meanwhile, Mr. Clinton, tired by his

romping games, seated himself by the fire. The children too, were somewhat more inclined to be quiet; a magic-lantern having, by its wonders, sobered them into puzzled surprise. However, they soon began to seek for some further amusement, and besieged Mr. Clinton afresh.

"Well, now what shall we do," said he, with the greatest good-humour, "are you not disposed for a quiet game?"

"A story! tell us a story, dear papa," shouted little Henry Clinton.

"Yes, a story—a story!" was loudly repeated by all.

Mr. Clinton kindly complied, saying, "Well, you must give me a few minutes to think of one that will profit as well as amuse you."

The few minutes' silence that succeeded, calmed down the boisterous spirits of the young ones, so that all were still when he looked up again, saying, in a very cheerful voice, (in which, notwithstanding, there was something which checked all undue mirth,) "I have thought of a story; it is a little graver than blind-man's-buff, and will require all your attention; but I should be sorry to part with you without a word you would do well to remember."

"O yes, papa," said John, "we will be very attentive."

Mr. Clinton looked up to see if all were settled; and certainly, if any thing were needed to warm a Christian's heart with tender love, it would be such

a sight of little ones grouped around, with beaming faces and eyes. When, however, he saw Jessie Blackburn and Ellen Mordaunt sitting together a little beyond them, he smiled, and slightly colouring, said, "You will put me to shame, young ladies, my stories will not do for such critical ears."

"Never mind us, Mr. Clinton," said Jessie, "look upon us as children too; pray do not send us away."

"I could not be so uncourteous," replied he, "if you wish to remain. Now, children, for the story. There was once upon a time a little boy. He had been used for a long time to live upon the seas, in a beautiful little ship. She was painted with bright colours, and went through the water like a bird, with fair sails and a gay flag flying from the mast."

"What was the boy's name, papa?" asked Henry.

"Samuel," replied his father. "He was very happy, and he used to go from one bright island to another in his ship, catching the humming birds, and the gay butterflies, and picking up curious shells. Well, one day, when the sun was shining fair, Samuel saw another ship come close beside his own. It was larger than his, but it did not look so pretty. There were no gay colours on its sides, and it looked much darker and heavier. A tall grave person stood on the deck, and spoke to him. 'Samuel,' he said, 'I want you to leave that ship of yours, and to come to mine instead.' 'Why should

I leave my pretty ship?' asked Samuel, 'yours is not half so beautiful.' 'Because,' replied the stranger, 'though your ship may do very well now, it has no strength to resist the storms which may come with large waves and gusts of wind; and besides, there are holes underneath which you cannot see, which must in time let the water in, and your ship will sink. Take my advice, and come into my ship which is quite safe.' 'Nonsense,' said Samuel, 'I do not think there is any danger. I cannot leave my beautiful ship, the sea is quite calm, and I see no clouds. I thank you. Good-bye;' and with spreading sails, Samuel's ship flew bounding over the blue waves. Over and over again the stranger's ship came close to Samuel's, to warn him of his danger, and to beg him to leave his ship. But Samuel grew quite weary of being so often called, and when he saw him coming, he used at last to steer in another direction. Still the stranger followed him, and sometimes in the very middle of the night, when Samuel could not see him come, his deep but very gentle voice would be heard entreating the heedless boy to listen. 'Come foolish child,' he said, 'and I will take you to a far more lovely island than these in which you sport. There you will find kind companions, and great joy will fill your heart.' Samuel would not heed; but what do you think he did? he tried to find the island himself in his own ship. The stranger saw what he was about, and said to him, 'You will never find the way in your own little

vessel, Samuel. There is only one person who knows the way, and who can take you there, and that person is myself. Come to me, and I will convey you safely over the sea.' But Samuel laughed out-right. 'Why,' said he, 'should I not find the way myself? no, no, I will not be so silly as to leave my pretty ship for nothing.' The stranger said no more, and for many days Samuel did not see him. He was very glad of this, for now he could amuse himself as he liked, and while steering for that most beautiful island, could stop as often as he pleased at those green and flowery isles which he loved so much. One evening the sea began to dash a little louder than usual, and the sun set behind a dark cloud. Samuel felt a little afraid as he went down to his cabin, and presently he heard the low moaning of the wind and the rattling of the ropes. He went on deck; the sky was all dark, and he saw in one spot a small grey cloud flying towards him with great speed. He trembled then, for he knew that that cloud brought the hurricane."

"What's a hurricane?" asked Robert, in a deep low tone.

"It is a tremendous wind," replied Mr. Clinton, "which blows so terribly hard, that ships on the sea, and houses on the land, are destroyed by it—something like the simoom in the deserts."

"Yes, yes; I know what that is," cried Robert, with breathless eagerness. "Oh, please go on; what did he do?"

"He did not know what to do," replied Mr. Clinton; "he stood still in terror. The cloud came nearer and nearer, and beneath it the waves seemed drawn up as if to meet it. Soon a deep rushing sound was heard, and the hurricane burst over Samuel's vessel. Split went the sails, down came the spars, crash went the mast, and then Samuel felt that the ship was filling with water. The stranger's words were true—there were holes underneath, and she was sinking."

"Oh, Mr. Clinton," said Annie, "was poor Samuel drowned?"

"Samuel tried to hold by a rope for some time, but the wind blew so hard that his ship was carried before it, and Samuel could not hold on steadily. All at once it struck on a rock, and Samuel was thrown into the sea. The great waves swallowed him up, and he lost his senses. At length he awoke, and found himself sitting on a desert island. Not a tree was in sight, and great rocks stood up all round him; the waves were still breaking, but the rain had ceased, and a basking sun almost deprived him of his senses again. He looked for some way of escape, but there was none! for food, there was none! for shade, there was none! Then he thought of the stranger's words, and felt how foolish and wicked he had been. 'Oh that I had listened to his voice,' cried he, clasping his hands together; 'oh that I had believed him; how wicked and ungrateful I was. Kind stranger, have you quite forsaken me? Shall I never see you more?'

Just then a spark appeared in the far horizon; it grew larger and larger; it came nearer and nearer; oh, joy! joy! it was the stranger's vessel; and there he himself stood on the deck. 'Samuel,' he said, 'you would not believe me when the sky was clear and the sea was calm, do you believe me now?' Samuel fell on his knees. 'Have pity on me,' he cried. 'Save me from this dreadful place.' He dared not look up, lest he should see a frown on that face, once so kind. But that loving friend replied in the gentlest voice, 'Fear not, my child, only believe my words, and come to me and I will save you.' He held out his hand; Samuel took it, and springing into the vessel, threw himself at his deliverer's feet."

Mr. Clinton paused, and Anne said, "And did the stranger take him to that beautiful island?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Clinton. "And when Samuel got there, and saw the lovely fields and the clear fountains, and the people in shining robes, he used to sing for joy, 'Oh happy day when I was wrecked; happy day when the hurricane burst on my vessel, and left me on that desert shore. But for that, I should never have been here; I should never have known Thy goodness, my Friend and Saviour.'"

There was a deep silence for a minute or two, and then Robert said,

"But is it a true story? was Samuel a real boy?"

"There have been many boys and girls like

Samuel," replied Mr. Clinton; "my story was an allegory—who can tell me what an allegory is?"

"I can," said John; "it's something like a parable; it's a story with a meaning to it."

"Yes," said his father; "and now I should like to see if you all understand it. John, you are the eldest, I begin with you. What does Samuel mean in his little ship?"

"Is it a boy, papa, living in the world, with everything to make him happy?"

"Yes," said Mr. Clinton, "just like you all. When I look round at your happy faces, I think I see Samuel in his little boat, going from island to island, from pleasure to pleasure, full of joy, and never thinking of the troubles which older people feel, and which you must feel too some day. Now, Annie, can you tell me who was the stranger who came and offered to save him?"

Annie coloured, and said, "I don't know."

Mr. Clinton looked to the next child, a sweet little boy of six years old. He answered, in a clear and distinct voice, "Jesus Christ."

"Right," said Mr. Clinton; "but Samuel would not listen. What does Jesus Christ want to save us from; is it the sea?"

"No," said Robert, "it's worse than that; it's hell!"

"And why would not his own boat hold?"

John answered, "Because we cannot be saved by our own goodness."

"And what was the island the stranger promised him? Now, Annie."

She had caught the general idea, and answered hesitatingly, "Heaven."

"Quite right, my child. Now, tell me why he set out for the island in his own ship."

Henry said, "Because he wanted to get to heaven by his own goodness."

"And why did the stranger tell him no one knew the way, or could take him there but himself?"

He looked towards Annie; but she was silent.

"Papa," said little Margaret, "may I say? Because Jesus Christ said, 'I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life, no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.'"

Mr. Clinton, seeing that his own children gave the principal answers, asked fewer questions, but in very easy language explained the story to them.

"And so, my dear children," he said, when he had finished the explanation, "You see, it is a good thing to have troubles and dangers, if they lead us to Jesus Christ at last. The hurricane, after all, was better than the calm. I have one word more to say. It is New-Year's Night; we do not know if we shall all be alive next New-Year's Day. Shall we ask that kind friend to take us into his ship *at once, before* the storms come?"

A low, murmured "Yes" was heard on all sides, and then they all knelt down, just where they were, while, with deep feeling, Mr. Clinton besought the Saviour to bless those little ones, and

to shut them in the ark before sorrow should cloud their happy faces, or the deluge of his anger should descend.

They rose with sobered hearts, but there was a deeper happiness among them than even in the height of their glee; and an impression was made, that took its place among *the many* things which together form the mind and character of the young.

The following morning, after breakfast, before the children's school hour, Robert and Annie were detailing to their mother the delights of the preceding day.

"But, O mamma," said Robert, "I wish you had heard the story Mr. Clinton told us; may I tell it you, mamma?" And then, without waiting for a reply, he began, and very correctly, and with great animation, he repeated it.

"And then, mamma, Mr. Clinton asked us all questions about it, to make us understand it,"

"And could you answer him?" asked his mother.

"Sometimes," answered Robert, "but not nearly so well as John, and Henry, and Margaret did. They answered so well; and Margaret told him verses out of the Bible."

"And which of you answered the best?" asked Mrs. Mordaunt. Robert made no reply; he knew that he had answered several questions, when Annie could not; but he was a generally modest child, and said nothing. Annie, however, said, the colour rising in her cheeks,

"Robert answered much better than I did, mamma, but neither of us knew half as much as Mr. Clinton's children."

Mrs. Mordaunt said no more, but bent her eyes on her work, and very soon lessons began. That day was a rainy one, and the children lost their usual walk. Ellen, therefore, sat with her mother at work during the hour and a half before dinner. For some time there was silence; but at length Mrs. Mordaunt said, without raising her eyes,

"I know I have a very weak judgment, and am ignorant of many things that most people know; but, in my opinion, it is better to say so at once, and then people cannot expect much from me."

Ellen looked up in mute surprise.

"I do think, however," continued her mother, "that when people set themselves up as very good, and more religious than other people, they ought to be consistent."

"Dear mamma," said Ellen, "I do not know of whom you are speaking."

"It matters very little of whom I am speaking," said Mrs. Mordaunt, "but I must say I am surprised that you, Ellen, who make so much profession of religion, should neglect your little brother and sister, and allow them to be put to shame before people whose children are not much older than they are."

"Mamma," said Ellen, enlightened by the last part of her mother's speech as to the cause of all this, "I assure you it was not so; considering

how young they are, Annie and Robert, answered very well. Willie did not; but I do not think Mr. Clinton asked him any thing, because he was so little; and he was half asleep on my knee during the last part."

"Nonsense, my dear," said her mother, "the children themselves told me that they could not answer, and that Mr. Clinton's children knew much more than they did. For my part, I think it was a very odd thing of Mr. Clinton to catechise them at all. What had religion to do with a children's party? 'There's a time for all things,' and that I believe is Bible authority, so *you* of course will not dispute it."

"No, mamma," said Ellen; "but was not New Year's Night just the time to talk to them about religion, and make an impression on their minds?"

"I do not think so at all," said Mrs. Mordaunt; "in my opinion, children should be taught to look on religion as a happy thing, and not *gloomy*."

"There was nothing gloomy in what Mr. Clinton said, mamma dear," replied Ellen, "and none of the children were made at all less happy by it, though perhaps," she added, "a little more quiet."

"That is just what I say," replied her mother. "Well, I do think children are a great deal better without being stuffed with difficult doctrines and hard texts, which they cannot understand. It can do them no good."

"Dear mamma," said Ellen, the tears starting to her eyes, "Do you not remember what Jessie told

us about her little brother Martyn? how thankful he was that he had been taught the Bible when he was a little child? Do you not recollect that it was the verses and hymns he had learnt, which were of so much use to him afterwards?"

Mrs. Mordaunt made no answer for a minute or two; and then in a less steady voice she resumed—

"Then if you think it so useful, why have you not taught the children better? Your father persuaded me to entrust their instruction to you, and I have been too unwell to attend to it myself. I thought it was too much for you, and now I see I was right."

"My dear mamma," exclaimed Ellen with great eagerness, "how gladly would I have taught them, but you yourself forbade me. I have longed to ask you to give your permission, but I feared you would not; indeed, indeed, believe me it has not been my fault." And Ellen's tears began to fall.

"It is no use crying, Ellen," said her mother. "Getting angry about it will not help the matter at all."

"I am not angry," said Ellen, drying up her tears; "but I cannot bear to hear you blame me, for what really has not been my fault."

Just then the clock struck, and Mrs. Mordaunt, putting up her work, desired Ellen to get ready for dinner, and went out of the room.

What were Ellen's feelings after this con-

versation? She had herself been greatly impressed with Mr. Clinton's story; she had had so little opportunity of judging how easily the attention of little children can be engaged, and their feelings touched, that she was surprised and delighted with the effect produced. She had, it is true, felt a little anxiety as they all knelt down, lest her father should happen to come in, and her heart beat at every sound; but she had not anticipated such results as these, for she had been quite surprised at Robert's proficiency. Poor Ellen! she stood at her window, and lifted her tearful eye to the still cloudy heavens. "*Thou* knowest I am not to blame," she was about to say; but she checked the words, "For oh," she thought, "I might have done more—though forbidden to teach the Bible, I might have talked to them, and questioned them—and I know I did not very much wish to teach them, and therefore my prayers were not earnest enough; but 'He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'" And at this recollection, a bright smile lighted up her features, and left its softened traces there when Ellen took her seat at the dinner-table.

Now, it is not Mrs. Mordaunt's history that is being told, or else the workings of her mind might here be described. Thus much, however, must be said, that her own conscience had not been very easy after forbidding the teaching of the Scriptures; and she had more than once been on the point of taking this duty on herself; but, partly false

shame, partly ill-health, and moreover, a secret consciousness of her own ignorance, had prevented her. She had been deeply moved by Jessie's touching account of her brother, and the part referred to by Ellen had lodged in her conscience. She felt greatly vexed when hearing of the proficiency of Mr. Clinton's little daughter Margaret, whose intelligence she had frequently noticed, although younger even than Robert—for the idea that her children had been behind-hand was very galling. The finishing stroke to her vexation was put, when Ellen quoted the very part of Jessie's story that had struck her so much; and she was not sorry of a pretext to scold Ellen for neglecting the children, and then for losing temper. When Ellen was gone, she felt that both these accusations were unjust, and as a last resource, she looked at Ellen as she came into dinner, ready to see and to reprove the traces on her face of gloomy or irritated feelings. But when she saw the reverse of this, and could not fail of observing the gentleness of Ellen's manner, and the total absence of any thing like resentment, she was entirely disarmed.

Being a person of very quick impulses, her feelings towards Ellen underwent a complete revolution; and, directly after dinner, she took her husband into her own room, gained his consent, and hastened up to Ellen, just as the latter was preparing to go down for afternoon lessons.

"Well, Ellen," she said, in a very kind tone, "I have been thinking it all over, and have decided

that you shall read the Bible every morning with the children—only you will try not to tire them by reading too much at a time.”

“Dearest mamma, how can I thank you enough,” exclaimed Ellen, and she threw her arms around her mother’s neck. Mrs. Mordaunt kissed her affectionately, and lifting her up, looked into her face.

“What, tears again, Ellen! well, I must forgive you this time—you are pleased, then, with this permission?”

“Yes, yes, dear mamma,” said Ellen, “it is what I have longed, and—” she hesitated, “prayed for.”

“You are a good girl, Ellen,” said Mrs. Mordaunt; “your religion has improved you, and therefore I believe it to be sincere.”

What a happy moment for Ellen! all her troubles were forgotten. She took her mother’s hand, “If you did but know how much happier it has made me.”

“You do not always look very happy, Ellen.”

“No, dear mamma, I am not happy always. When I do wrong I am very miserable; but I mean, I never knew what real happiness was till—till I read my Bible, and learnt the love of God.”

“I wish I were like you, Ellen,” said Mrs. Mordaunt, as she looked on Ellen’s young and earnest face.

“Oh, do not say so, my dear mamma,” exclaimed

Ellen; "if you knew how bad I really am, my only hope is that Jesus Christ will be my righteousness. There is no other hope for any of us."

Mrs. Mordaunt did not reply to this remark, but after a pause said, "I must leave you now, my dear, the children will be waiting." She kissed her and went to the door; scarcely, however, was it closed than she returned, and said, "Do not forget to pray for me, Ellen, my dear child."

"No, indeed, my dear mamma," said Ellen, embracing her, and Mrs. Mordaunt hastened away.

What delightful feelings filled Ellen's heart during the rest of that day. What could possibly have occasioned this change in her mother! Could it be the beginning of that mighty work without which none can see the kingdom of God? Some of her words had warranted such a hope, and, in imagination, she foresaw the happy time when they should all go hand in hand. But her father! she could not feel encouragement when thinking of him. But she would pray daily for him and for her mother, and the promise was so plain, "Ask and ye shall receive."

She began her new employment the next morning, and continued steadily. Sometimes, indeed, when her own heart was cold, or her conscience uneasy, she found it but a weary work; but it was not always so, and the result at all events was the rapid progress of her little pupils in the knowledge of the Word of God.

CHAPTER XI.

FRESH TRIALS.

"For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do,"—ROMANS vii. 19.

As the winter rolled on, Ellen made perceptible progress in the knowledge of the Scriptures, and much more, though unconsciously, in the practice of what she learnt. In one thing she herself felt a change, and that was in her desire for the good of others. She worked on perseveringly with the children, but she began to look around to see if there was no other claimant on her exertions. She knew that a word spoken to any of the natives would give great displeasure to her father, so she carefully abstained from it; but was there no one else? While these thoughts were occupying her mind, their faithful nurse, Dinah, was taken seriously ill. She had often been ailing in England, and now a violent cold attacked her lungs. By the end of a week she had greatly recovered, and in a few days more resumed her work, but she looked older than she did before her illness, and often complained of a pain in her side. The idea suddenly occurred to Ellen that she might be of use to this old servant, who, though a thoroughly trust-

worthy person, was sadly deficient in religious light and knowledge. "She is old," thought Ellen, "and how delightful would be the thought that I had been an instrument of good to our faithful nurse."

Now be it known that Ellen did not in her innermost heart at all like the undertaking in its working out; however desirous she might be for the results, she shrank from making the proposal to Dinah, and from beginning her self-imposed task. But having once believed it to be her duty, she had no peace of conscience till it was accomplished. Accordingly, one evening before tea, she went up into Dinah's room with her Bible in her hand, and with a strong effort mastering her shrinking feeling, she said—

"How comfortable you look, Dinah; how do you feel to-night?"

"I thank you, Miss," was the reply, "I feel pretty well, only a bit tired."

"You cannot read at night, I know," said Ellen, summoning up all her courage, "and so I have come to read to you a little, if you like."

Old Dinah raised her head from her work with some surprise, and looked at Ellen through her spectacles. "That's very good of you, Miss," said she, "I shall like it very much," and she looked at the Bible in Ellen's hand.

"I shall not have much time," said Ellen, "and so I have brought the best of all books, the Bible;" and without waiting for more, for fear of meeting

any discouraging looks, she began to read the Gospel according to St. Luke. Gaining courage as she proceeded, she ventured to make a few remarks, and to ask Dinah a few questions; and then, pleased with her success, and receiving many thanks from Dinah, she went away to tea.

So far, all was well: but difficulties arose. Dinah herself was not always very tractable; like most ignorant persons, she was very self-opinionated, and thought that what she had believed all her life must be true. The chief point of difference was the place good works should hold; for, while Ellen assured her, and gave her Scripture proofs as authority, that "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags," and are only valuable when produced by the Spirit of God, as the fruits of believing, Dinah contended that if she only did her duty she would be sure to go to heaven; and she would add, "I never did any one any harm that I know of; and ask your mamma, Miss, if I have not served my master faithfully; I say the Lord's Prayer every night and morning, and I go to Church whenever I am not wanted in the house; and what more does God require of a poor woman like me?"

To this Ellen would reply, by directing her to our Lord's summary of the law of God. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself."

"Dear me," said old Dinah, "why, Miss, there's nobody that does not *sometimes* do wrong!

If *that* is what is asked of us, we must all go to hell."

"Yes," answered Ellen, "and so we *should* all be sent there for ever, if God had not given His dear Son to keep that law for us, and to die in our stead."

"Well, then," would the old woman reply, "that's just what I've always been told. Jesus Christ died for us, to save us from hell. I believe that, Miss Ellen, as much as you do, so we are all of one mind."

Ellen knew they were very far from being of one mind, but she was at a loss what to reply. So at last she resolved to consult Jessie, which she did, and by this means was instructed herself, and enabled to give Dinah clearer answers. Jessie urged her, as much as possible, to reply in the words of Scripture, and to impress on Dinah their authority and complete sufficiency. She also furnished Ellen with many texts on different subjects, and advised her in her own daily reading to mark down, under the same heads, any that she herself might meet with. By these means, Ellen became more and more acquainted with that book which is "the Sword of the Spirit," more expert in the use of it, and, it is delightful to add, more experienced in its power on her own heart. Though often distressed by doubts and perplexed by difficulties, she less and less stumbled at those passages of a more dark and mysterious meaning, which she met with, and which at one period she had almost

been disposed to cavil at. Now her daily study of the Bible became more practical, and her aim was to maintain a spiritual frame throughout the day. We say her *aim*, for like many, perhaps all, who have trod the same narrow way, she found *this* the grand difficulty. Her constant failings in this respect, and many others, among which ranked very high the want of concentration of thought in prayer, often made her sigh in weariness of spirit. Many a time the language of her heart was that of David, "Oh that I had wings like a dove, for then would I flee away and be at rest." Often and often did she feel like the poor woman, who, being asked by her minister if she wished to be made holy, replied with tears, "Indeed, I wish I were dead, that I might sin no more."

Having, however, conquered her first repugnance, Ellen took great delight in her work with Dinah. She persevered in spite of all discouragement, and sometimes a bright gleam of hope would cheer her, to bid her go on with new energy.

One sunny morning early in March, Ellen and the children, attended by Dinah, started for a ramble. They pursued the high road for a little distance, and then seeing to the right a large iron gate with olive grounds beyond, and a road leading up the hill, they entered. It was a new spot to them, and consequently gave great delight to the children. They pursued the broad pathway for some time, and then by one narrower and more stony they reached the top of the hill. Here a beautiful



prospect lay before them. To the left were thick groves of olive trees, from among which little Willie discovered their own house peeping out to his great joy. To the right was a deep valley, in the midst of which lay the stony bed of a wide torrent, beyond which new hills arose, here and there varied with country houses ; and before them stretched the calm blue sea, dotted with white sails.

"How magnificent!" burst from Ellen's delighted lips. The children, after looking for a few minutes, began to play about. Ellen saw that Dinah felt something of the influence of that lovely scene, and she thought that she should like to turn the present enjoyment to good. While she was considering, Dinah spread her pocket-handkerchief over the somewhat mouldy rocks, by way of preparation, and then sat down. "There's plenty of room for you, Miss Ellen;" and Ellen sat down by her side. In another minute, Ellen had drawn her Bible from her bag, and began reading aloud from Psalm civ. Whatever impression it might have made on Dinah, Ellen herself felt deeply the beauty and sublimity of the Psalm, in the midst too of such appropriate scenery. So deeply engaged was she, that she neither saw nor heard her father approach ; in fact, the first intimation she had of his coming was the sudden rising of Dinah. She then started, and was about to hurry her Bible into her bag ; but she thought *that* would seem as if she were ashamed of it, so she held it still in her hand. Her father did not look pleased.

"You are doing very wrong to sit out of doors, Dinah," he said; "and as for you, Ellen, get up directly; how could you think of such a thing?"

"It is quite warm, dear papa," Ellen began.

"Never mind; you think it warm, perhaps, but the season is too early for such doings; never let me hear of your sitting down out of doors, till I give you leave. Come, it's near dinner-time; make haste home. Not that way," he said, as they turned to descend the hill; "the way I came is far shorter:" and so they cut through the olive-yards, or forests, as Annie called them, and very soon reached the house.

When they got in, Mr. Mordaunt called his wife, and told her how Ellen and Dinah had been employed. This roused Mrs. Mordaunt's indignation; for she was sure, she said, the children could not have been attended to properly, and might have fallen, or got into mischief, while Dinah's attention was engaged. "I think it very wrong of her," she concluded, "and I shall tell her so:" and forthwith she proceeded to Dinah's room, and began to question her.

"I must desire, Dinah," she said, "that you do not ask Ellen to read to you out of doors; her father has a particular objection to it."

"Indeed, ma'am, I did not ask Miss Ellen," said Dinah; "as she was so kind to read to me, I could not refuse; but I'll tell her next time to wait for the evening, like other days."

"Other days!" repeated Mrs. Mordaunt; "What do you mean?"

"Miss Ellen has been so good as to read the Bible to me of late, ma'am," said Dinah, "and to talk to me about it."

"This seems to me very odd," said Mrs. Mordaunt, "and very presumptuous, without either her father's leave or mine. Did you ask her to do it, Dinah?"

"No, ma'am; Miss Ellen offered to read to me of her own accord, and I took it as very kind of her."

"Are you not able to read to yourself?" said Mrs. Mordaunt.

"Yes, ma'am," said Dinah; "but of course I haven't a great deal of time; and at night my eyes are but feeble for making out a book, though I can work."

"I never knew before that *you* were fond of books, Dinah," said Mrs. Mordaunt; "and I should have thought you too faithful in your duty to the children, to listen to books, instead of taking care that they do not fall down, or get into danger, when they are out."

This was touching Dinah upon two tender points. She had a great idea that it looked conceited to be fond of book-learning; and that *she* should be neglecting her duty to the children,—*that was* a sore cut.

"Indeed, ma'am," said she with some warmth, "I doesn't think much about books myself, only I

thought it would be ungrateful to refuse what Miss Ellen meant as a kindness; and as for my young miss and masters, ma'am, sooner than neglect them, I'd never hear a word more of the Bible than what the minister reads in the church. That's what the Bible's for, to teach us our duty; and mine is to attend upon my master's children."

"Very true," said Mrs. Mordaunt, "but I do not wish you *not* to read the Bible, Dinah; read it to yourself by day, when you have time, and on Sundays you can have full opportunity."

So saying, and very well pleased at having given Dinah more than she had asked, Mrs. Mordaunt went down: her whole indignation settling on Ellen, as the cause of all the disturbance.

That evening, before tea, Ellen was summoned to her mother's room, where she was accosted by her father—

"Ellen," said he, "your mother and I desire that, for the future, you carry no books with you when out walking; you go out for exercise, not for study."

"Very well, dear papa," said Ellen with a sigh, "it shall be as you please."

"Certainly, it is to be as I please," said her father. "Stop, I have more to say to you. Your mother tells me that you have taken upon yourself the office of reader and preacher; which, in your position, I consider unnecessary and presumptuous; and I desire, therefore, that it be discontinued."

"Papa!" exclaimed Ellen, starting in the utmost astonishment, "do you mean Dinah?"

"I do," replied he: "I am quite surprised that you should have so good an opinion of yourself, as to teach an elderly person, and one, let me tell you, from whom you would do well to learn."

"I only read the Bible to her, papa," said Ellen, whose impatience was rising very high; "and whatever *else* she may know, she is very ignorant of *that*."

"I dare say she does not talk as much of her knowledge as you," said Mrs. Mordaunt. "Dinah *acts* religion, she does not *talk* it. She does not think it necessary to make such a profession as some people do: but what is profession without practice?"

"Practice is nothing," said Ellen, "taken by itself. If you were to question Dinah, mamma, you would see how ignorant she is."

"I do not consider myself capable of judging," replied Mrs. Mordaunt; "I am too ignorant myself. *My* religion teaches me that pride is a sin."

"And so does mine, mamma dear," said Ellen; "I know very little myself, and that little I am not proud of, for I did not learn it by myself. But I think I know more than Dinah, and I felt it my duty to read to her, and talk with her."

"Duty!" repeated Mrs. Mordaunt; "You have plenty of other duties, that are more fit for one so young as you. Leave Dinah alone; depend upon it, she can take care of herself."

"If you desire it, mamma," said Ellen, whose tears were falling fast, and whose temper was

greatly excited—"If you desire it, I must; but I think it very unjust, and very wrong."

"Ellen!" exclaimed her father; "silence directly! Go up to your room this minute, and stay there till the bell rings for tea."

Covered with shame, Ellen left the room. She went up in the dark, and sat down beside her bed. She tried to persuade herself that her mother alone was to blame, but conscience would speak, and it told her she had been very angry.

"How wicked I have been," said she, to herself. "What now must they think of my religion!" With tears she implored forgiveness at her Saviour's hands; but though she did not doubt His power and willingness to forgive, she still felt very unhappy, partly for her own angry temper, and yet more for the prohibition she had received. In this frame she went down to tea; and going to her father, she begged him to kiss her, saying, she was very sorry for her evil temper. He kissed her, but with less warmth than usual; and her mother received her embrace without returning it. Having repeated her avowal and promises of obedience, Ellen sat down. The evening passed with somewhat less cheerfulness than usual, and Ellen retired to her room to renew her confession before Him, who never fails to receive the contrite sinner, and to speak peace to the humble soul.

CHAPTER XII.

THE OLD HOUSE.

"Iron sharpeneth iron ; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." PROV. xxvii. 17.

THE following day saw Ellen pensively walking by the side of Jessie's donkey, holding little Willie by the hand, while Robert and Annie went on in front together. Jessie perceived there was something amiss, and asked her, kindly, if she were well.

"Quite well, thank you, dear Jessie," Ellen answered, looking up for a moment, and then again she was as silent as ever. Their walk lay up the lane, past Mr. Clinton's house. It led them into the country till they reached a little village church, in front of which stood one of the rude wooden crosses, so common in Roman Catholic countries, adorned with the usual lance, sponge, and cock, and the scroll or inscription. The young girl, who held Jessie's donkey, crossed herself as they passed; which caught the children's attention.

"What does she do *that* for, Miss Blackburn?" asked Robert.

"That is her way of showing respect for that cross," answered Jessie. "She does not know,

as you and I do, that it is wrong to do honour to a piece of wood. We should be very sorry for her, and pray to God that she may learn the truth!"

"What are those letters for?" asked Annie, pointing to the scroll at the top.

"Think a little, and you will be able to tell yourself," said Jessie. "What was written on the cross of our Blessed Lord?"

"Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," repeated Annie, looking again at the cross. "But that was written in Hebrew and Greek and Latin," said Robert: "this is only written once; so it is *not* like it, after all:" and he turned away with Annie.

They crossed a stony torrent, and turned into an orange garden. There was a kind of path before them, which, turning to the right, led up the hill. On the top of this hill is a large and very old house, bearing the marks of having been once a very handsome building. Its terraces and double stair-case without, and its lofty rooms within, attest its former grandeur; but now, weeds, rubbish, and cobwebs, conceal all, save some remnants of its pristine beauty. The little path, which leads to it, was, at the time our friends were walking there, scented with the violets which grew profusely on the banks on either side. Here Jessie alighted from her donkey, and taking Ellen's arm, walked slowly up the hill. The children, in high glee, ran about gathering violets.

For a minute or two the young friends pursued their way in silence. They soon paused, to enable Jessie to gain breath to finish the ascent, and stood together, looking round on the lovely country scene. It should rather be said Jessie looked, inhaling that invigorating and scented air, for Ellen's eyes were fixed on the deep blue sky, where it seemed to meet the mountain top before them. Jessie bent on her a tender look of enquiry, and said—

“My dearest Ellen, you are looking at that glorious sky, as though you would fain drink its beauty into your very soul.”

“Jessie,” said Ellen, now turning to her, “Is it wrong to feel a longing wish to leave this world, and go to the bright land beyond that sky?”

“Not wrong, dear Ellen, if a right feeling prompts the wish. It is not wrong to yearn for the presence of the Saviour, and sigh to have done with this body of sin and death. But *you* are young to feel this so ardently as your eyes expressed; your work is only just begun.”

“Oh, do not tell me so,” said Ellen, earnestly: “I long to have done with sin for ever. I have no strength to fight with the temptations around. I almost wish to die; and yet I shrink from expressing that wish; for, perhaps, I am not ready yet.”

“No, dearest Ellen, we are none of us ready as long as we remain on earth. ‘But when the fruit is brought forth, *immediately* He putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.’”

"But I shall never bring forth this fruit. I bring dishonour on the cause I profess. If I were safe in heaven, and free from sin, how happy I should be."

"Are you then weary of the work assigned to you?" asked Jessie; "or do you doubt His promise—'My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness?' Do not, my dearest Ellen, encourage these lazy thoughts. Forgive me this harsh word, but such is the truth. You have only just started on the race, can you expect so soon to reach the goal?"

"Oh no; I am very wrong, very idle," said Ellen, who could no longer restrain her tears; "perhaps, I have been wishing for what would not be good for me, but my courage fails me so often."

Jessie answered in the words of Scripture—'And the man out of whom the devils were departed, prayed Him, that he might be with Him. Howbeit, Jesus suffered him not, but said unto him, Return to thy friends, and tell them what great things God hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee,' "You, dearest Ellen, are like this man. You, too, have been healed; and you, too, pray the Lord that you may be with Him: but He answers you in the same words—'Return to thy friends.' Will you not execute this commission, given by Him who cleansed you?"

"Oh, Jessie, how sweetly you comfort me," said Ellen, her eyes brightening through her tears. "But this is the very trouble I now feel, *I cannot*

Jessie, tell my friends how much has been done for me."

The peculiar emphasis with which Ellen said this, revealed to Jessie the nature of her present distress. She directly guessed that some interdiction had been laid upon her, which had aroused her temper, and given rise to her desponding feelings. Her inmost heart sympathised with her dear young friend, for she foresaw the many difficulties which lay before her. She also felt great perplexity how to advise her; for to dwell on her home-troubles would only increase them, and might prove very injurious to Ellen. Till now, not a word on this subject had been breathed by either of them, except in general terms; so she determined to leave it to Ellen's own choice, whether she would tell her or no.

"Ellen, my dear child," she said, "sometimes we are in error when we fix on a particular way of fulfilling a command; and when that way is no longer open to us, we imagine ourselves unable to fulfil it at all. But it is not really so; some other way may be opened to us, that as yet we do not know of."

"Oh, I hope it will be so with me," said Ellen, "for that which I had thought my duty, it is no longer in my power to do. I must tell you, Jessie. No, it cannot be wrong to tell you, for you will advise me how to act." And Ellen related all that had passed.

"I feel much for you, my dear Ellen," said

Jessie, kindly taking her hand in hers, "at this downfall of your hopes and schemes. I can only repeat to you what I have before said. There is One, who knows far better than you do what you ought to do. There are two things I would say to you, my dear child. First, it is your duty to submit to your parents' wishes: Dinah is not dependent on you for the Bible; if she were, I might speak differently; and who can tell that what you have already said has not taken some root? At all events, you have no alternative. 'Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.' The second thing I would say is, remember whose doing it all is. It is not your father or your mother who have put a stop to your work with Dinah, but He, 'without whom not a sparrow falleth to the ground.' I do not mean that your reading the Scriptures to her was not pleasing in His sight, far from it; but I mean that, for some reason which is hidden from us, He has seen fit to allow it to be stopped: and He says to you, as to Peter, 'What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.' Remember then, dear Ellen, that it is to the will of God you are now called upon to submit; only try, I must beg of you, to keep your temper down, for 'He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.'"

This manner of putting the subject effectually quieted the risings of rebellion in Ellen's heart; and pressing Jessie's arm, she walked silently on.

They reached the old house, and went up the winding-stair. It being double, the children, of course, must needs mount the opposite side, hailing them with shouts of glee from the top, which they soon reached. A beautiful prospect of the town, the old chateau, and the sea beyond, was seen from thence, and the friends stopped to gaze at it.

"Why is this chateau stair-case *not* like the road to heaven?" said Jessie to the children, who had been running up and down, some on one side, and some on the other, and now stopped to rest themselves. "Think before you speak," she added, as they both said, "I don't know;" "I will help you a little. Think of Mr. Clinton's story, and what the stranger said, about his ship alone being able to take Samuel to the island."

They both stood in thought, and presently Robert said, "I think I know; is it this, Miss Blackburn? there are two stair-cases, and they both lead to the same place, but there is only one way to heaven."

"And what is that, Annie?" interrupted Jessie.

"Jesus Christ," she replied.

"Quite right, my dear children," said Jessie, "you have answered well."

They now entered the open door, and seeing a broad stair before them, they went up, passed another door, and to the surprise of all, found themselves within a spacious and exceedingly lofty room. A few old chairs were the only furniture; and the sound of their own footsteps and voices was

returned in echoes on their ears. They all stood still: even the children felt a peculiar influence, and were silent. At last, Jessie said, "who could have been the original owner of this splendid mansion? In *my* country they would say that such a house was haunted."

Scarcely had she spoken, when a ringing laugh was heard. They all started, and the children drew closer to the two girls.

"What can it have been?" said Ellen, looking a little pale.

"Only somebody laughing, who is in the house besides ourselves," answered Jessie; "and no great wonder, considering we found the doors open."

Another laugh was again heard, and the sound of footsteps. Robert ran to the door before him, and in an instant returned, accompanied by Mr. and Miss Clinton, and the eldest boy. On coming in, they saw Jessie and Ellen standing in the middle of the room, and Miss Clinton advanced with both hands outstretched towards them.

"Well, my dear girls," said she, "and how are you both, and what has brought you to this old tumble-down place? What a pity it is left to the rats and spiders to play their games in."

"If you had not appeared," said Jessie, "we might, perhaps, have added *ghosts* to the list of the inhabitants; for we were just now quite startled by the sound of your voices, awakening the slumbering echoes."

"Well, now, did you take me for a ghost, or a

goblin, which was it?" and Miss Clinton laughed with a right good will. "I did not frighten you, my dear?" she added, looking at Ellen, who stood silently by Jessie's side.

"Oh, no," said Ellen, now joining in the laugh, "I was not much frightened; you appeared so soon, that all our fears were dispelled."

Miss Clinton kept looking in Ellen's face, as she spoke.

"You look pale to-day, my love," she said, "but I hope you are well?"

Ellen, laughing, assured her she was perfectly well.

"We have been all over this curious place," continued Miss Clinton. "There are two more rooms as lofty as this, and the rest appear to have had a lower ceiling made, to form rooms above. And there are signs of human care,—for, look here"—and she led them through a large door to a long and covered verandah, where were set some flower-pots and creeping plants. As Mr. Clinton approached, his sister, smiling, told him of the alarm she had caused, and he replied—

"It is not the first time that such fears have been excited within these old walls."

"What now," said his sister; "is it a ghost-story you have got, William? Come, tell us at once, on the enchanted spot."

"I have been told," he replied, "that this house was not long ago inhabited by an English family, who rendered themselves obnoxious to the priests,

by their endeavours to do good to the poor benighted Italians, and that they were continually disturbed by mysterious sounds in the garrets above."

"And did they discover the ghost?" asked Ellen, smiling.

"Yes," answered Mr. Clinton; "it was finally discovered to be done by their own servants, under the influence of the priests. The end of it was they were expelled the country."

"But did they see any fruit of their labours?" enquired Jessie.

"Yes, I believe there was one man, at least, who received lasting benefit from their efforts. Poor fellow! he was greatly persecuted for his opinions, both by the Government and by his own family, but he remained firm."

"No! did he!" exclaimed Miss Clinton: "well, that's a sweet encouragement for the poor ladies. I hope they heard of it. Ah! it's a sad, dark land we live in, though such a fair one."

The party returned together, and separated at Mr. Clinton's door.

CHAPTER XIII.

ANOTHER CHANGE.

"For He commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof."—PSALM cvii. 25.

It would prolong our story too much, were we to record every event that befel our friends during their stay at Nice. Spring rapidly advanced, and brought its usual train of bright flowers and leaves to earth, and fresh hopes to man. But alas! with all its loveliness, it proved, as it often does, a trying season for invalids: and more than one of those whom Ellen had been accustomed to notice on the beach, she missed from their usual walk. Some had left Nice in search of a less-exciting climate and more than one were laid in the churchyard.

Among those to whom Spring brought a change for the worse, was Jessie Blackburn. She had revived greatly after their first arrival, and her fond father had watched her with rekindled hopes; but when the Spring winds set in, they seemed to blight her fair but fragile form, though she was carefully kept within doors.

One day she sent to ask if Ellen might come and see her, as she had been long confined to the

house, and permission was granted. Quite unaware that anything but a slight cold ailed Jessie, she arrived there with a light heart, anticipating the pleasure she should give her friend, by telling her what the night before had been announced to her, that her mother was looking forward to the birth of another baby. She started as she entered. Jessie was lying on the sofa, wrapped up in shawls; one bright hectic spot was on each side of the face, and the rest perfectly transparent in its whiteness. By her side sat Miss Clinton, with her cap on, and her knitting in her hand. Ellen stood for a moment as if transfixed.

"Jessie," she said, "what has happened?" and she looked from one to the other.

Miss Clinton got up to meet her, and said kindly, "Your friend is not very well, my dear child; we hope she will be better in a day or two."

Jessie held out her hand to her, and smiled.

"Dearest Ellen," she said, "how frightened you look. Come and sit down here by me, on the sofa."

"I did not know you were ill, Jessie," said Ellen, with difficulty restraining her feelings; "but, tell me, is there much the matter with you?"

"Not much," answered Jessie: "I caught a little cold last week, and these last few mornings I have again been spitting blood. Ellen! my dear child! do not look so pale, and so shocked; there is nothing to alarm you *yet*."

"Yet," repeated Ellen: "dearest Jessie, I never knew you were really ill. I did not expect this, and therefore was startled. I came, anticipating the pleasure of *telling you* my pleasure, and I find you lying here so ill."

For though Jessie did not make much of her illness, Ellen saw herself that Miss Clinton was installed there as a kind of nurse, and this was sufficient to alarm her.

"And what was your pleasure, dearest?" said Jessie, looking affectionately at her; "tell me, it will do me good."

Ellen told her the good news she had received, and tears of joy came into Jessie's eyes.

"Well, I am delighted to hear it," said Miss Clinton: "your poor mamma always looked so wistfully at our baby, that I used to keep him out of the way when she came; but it was of no use, for she always asked to see him, though it was sure to make her sad. What a fine little family she has already. That brother of yours, Robert, Miss Mordaunt, will be somebody, depend upon it, with that forehead of his. He and I are great friends."

Jessie turned towards her—

"Who is not friends with Miss Clinton that knows her?" she said, taking her hand in hers.

"Nay, my dear, now don't flatter me, or I shall grow vain. What does Mr. Blackburn think of that boy? does he not agree with me?"

"Yes, he does indeed," replied Jessie; "he is often surprised at his curious questions, and at the

progress he makes in his learning: but the remarkable thing about him is the strength of his affections; his love for my father is intense."

They talked thus for some time, till a message came for Ellen to return home.

Jessie got better after a few days, and her father relinquished his intention of immediately taking her away from Nice. She soon, to all appearance, became such as before, and as the Mordaunts intended moving in May, Mr. Blackburn felt anxious to keep in their company, for the sake of his child. He therefore told Mr. Mordaunt his wishes, adding—

"I feel very desirous not to go anywhere beyond the reach of kind friends, for if Jessie became worse, it would be very distressing for her to have no female friend at hand. I believe you think me very selfish, Mr. Mordaunt, but I have spoken my mind frankly: now speak yours."

"Mine," said Mr. Mordaunt, "is to be of as much service to you and Miss Blackburn as possible. We have been so much together, Mr. Blackburn, that I feel as little desire to part as you do. These *were* my plans, but mind, nothing is fixed. When I was a lad, I was abroad, and I remember perfectly visiting the Gulf of Spezzia, which lies beyond Genoa. Our stay was unexpectedly shortened, but I have never relinquished a plan I then formed of revisiting it. It was but a castle in the air, but you know, I dare say, that boyish associations are sometimes very strong: such was mine. So I had planned taking Mrs.

Mordaunt there, and if we found it pleasant, remaining there for a short time, and then proceeding to Leghorn or the Baths of Lucca. In August I expect my wife's confinement, and if she recovers it well, I think in September we may return to England the same way as we came. If she should prove delicate, I must leave her somewhere, while I go to England and my boy, and then return to her. Such are my plans, sir; if you can make them suit yours, so much the better; if not, perhaps we may be able to make some new arrangement."

"By no means," replied Mr. Blackburn. "I see no reason why we should not continue *together*; if I find my child suffering, I can but then convey her elsewhere. The change of air and scene is very likely to be of service to her; if not, God's will be done." For a moment his voice faltered, and his countenance expressed the acutest feeling. Then laying his hand on Mr. Mordaunt's shoulder, he said, "Do not think I want to keep her, if He sees it right to take her, I know she is ready."

Mr. Mordaunt, in a deep and feeling voice, replied, "It were well if we were all as prepared for death as Miss Blackburn. But, my dear sir, do not despond. Consider how much benefited she was by the change to this place. Another change may do wonders.

"I am willing to hope for every thing," answered Mr. Blackburn: "but it would be blind to feel *no* fears."

"May I suggest to you," said Mr. Mordaunt,

“words with which you are much acquainted— ‘Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.’ Let us use the means that are placed before us, and they seem to be a change of air and scene.”

“Yes, my dear friend,” answered Mr. Blackburn: “your words are, indeed, most true; we *will* use the means; and we will leave the future in the Lord’s hands.”

Their conversation lasted much longer; and during it, they decided on going by steamer to Genoa, and thence, hiring two carriages, to travel *voiturier*, to Spezzia. As soon as matters were settled, Ellen was told, and her joy was great. With the buoyancy natural to her years, she could not realise how ill Jessie really was—now that she *seemed* better—and her affectionate hopes took the form of certainty that the journey would do her good. One regret they had all to undergo, the parting from the Clintons; but it was likely not to be a lasting one, as their destination was the Baths of Lucca, after a short visit to the valleys of Piedmont. Ellen went with her father and mother to bid them farewell; and the children were sent with Dinah, in the afternoon, for the same purpose.

When Ellen went down that evening to make tea for her mother, she found Robert sitting at the table by himself, his head resting on his hand, reading a book. Annie and Willie were, as usual, at play; but Robert neither heeded them nor Ellen, as she came up to the table. When she had

finished what she was about, she stooped over him to see what book he was reading so earnestly.

"Oh, Ellen," said he, now for the first time seeing her, "what a beautiful book this is. Miss Clinton gave it to me. Look ; she told me I was to read it, and to do the same as that man " (pointing to a picture) ; "he is going along that little narrow path to that bright light I see. Here is another ; he is knocking at the gate where the light is. They'll let him in, Ellen ; for see, it is written over the gate, ' Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.' And oh, Ellen, here is another ; do you see that cross?—and, oh, look ! look ! there is a picture of the devil, trying to make the man go back ; but he won't go back, Ellen, I know, though I have not read so far, for he has got his sword in his hand ; and Mr. Blackburn says, *the Bible is our sword*, and that it will cut through every thing."

"Just let me look at the name," said Ellen. "'The Pilgrim's Progress, under the similitude of a Dream.' Have you shown it to mamma, yet?" continued Ellen, turning over the leaves, in surprise.

"No," replied Robert: "mamma was busy, and I did not see her ; but I will."

And so he did ; or rather to his father, as soon as he was seated at the tea-table. Mr. Mordaunt turned over the pages, and supposing it to be some fairy tale, gave it back to him, telling him he might read it, if it gave him any pleasure.

Delighted at the permission, Robert read, or

rather devoured it at every spare moment. What child does not love the Pilgrim's Progress, and with almost breathless anxiety follow the traveller from the City of Destruction, through all his wanderings, to the Celestial City, even when viewed only as an amusing tale! But it was not thus that our little friend regarded it. It has been already said, that he had very strong affections. Now, his love for Jessie was as intense as for her father. He regarded her almost as a being of another world; for his imagination was as lively as his heart was warm. He knew that she was ill; he knew also, that she looked forward to admission into *that* heaven, and among *those* angels, which were so often the subject of his dreams, and so associated in his mind with the azure sky by day and the starry dome by night. With the realising faith of a little child, he used often to picture her to himself (as he sat beside her), with her harp of gold, and her milk-white robes, and her sweet voice, hymning forth the song of the Redeemed. Sometimes at night when in his little crib, he used to try and fancy he could hear the voice of the heavenly host, and *hers* sweeter, more clear, than all. When she spoke of these things, he used to stand and look up into her face, seeming to drink in all she said. It was to her, that the following morning he carried his new book; and was delighted at her proposal, that he should read it with her, whenever he had been attentive with her father. He had been initiated into the beauties of allegory, not only

by Mr. Clinton's story, but by the parables and images of Scripture; which, to such a mind as his, came with great power and beauty. He therefore entered into Bunyan's Similitudes with heart and soul; and henceforth the Pilgrim's Progress gave its beauteous clothing to all the images of his fancy.

But we must hasten on to the departure of our friends; and we will pass over the regrets that one and all felt at leaving Nice. They had all enjoyed many pleasant hours there, and Ellen especially felt that she had learnt much during those months.

They embarked in the afternoon of a fine day in the end of May. The season being far advanced, it was already very warm. Almost oppressive, they felt it, as they drove to the port, and both the invalids looked pale and languid.

"May I, dear papa," said Ellen, in a beseeching voice, "may I have *one* turn on deck with you this evening, it will put me in mind of old times?"

"Old times, indeed," said he; "mind, I make no promises; we shall see."

Ellen knew that this was, with her father, tantamount to a promise; and she was very glad, for she dearly loved a walk with him. When all the party were safely lodged, the ladies and children in one cabin, the gentlemen in another, Ellen was summoned to accompany her father. Soon the heaving of the anchor was heard, and they started. Ellen turned for a last look at the dear old chateau, but they were quickly out of sight of all

that was familiar to her, and she began to feel a natural curiosity as to what she should see next. Her attention was, however, principally taken up by some heavy masses of dark clouds in the South East, and she pointed them out to her father.

"I had observed them," he replied: and as the captain was passing at the moment, he asked him what he thought of the weather.

The captain shook his head somewhat ominously, and replied that for the present all was fair, but that the clouds were gathering in a stormy quarter. As they paced the deck, a slight swell in the water made the vessel roll a great deal, and a few little white tufts on the far horizon told that the breeze was freshening.

"Do not tell your mother—we may have a small gale to-night," said Mr. Mordaunt, "it will only alarm her unnecessarily; after all, it may prove nothing."

They went down, and after some refreshment, retired to their respective berths. Ellen was by no means a timid girl, and all being quiet she was soon asleep. She was awakened by her father's voice, and started up. For a minute or two she felt bewildered, but gradually became conscious of a great noise, and of the pitching of the vessel so violently, that she was nearly thrown out of her berth. There were the sounds of many voices, and of a great bustle on deck; and the rattling of the ropes, and the pattering of rain, told her that there was a storm. Another minute, and a loud peal of thunder

rolled over their heads. She jumped up, and ran to her mother's berth.

"Oh, Ellen!" she said: "what a dreadful storm; I cannot lie here, I must get up."

It was vain to persuade her to remain quiet: she insisted on getting up, and partially dressing herself.

"Where is papa?" said Ellen; "I thought I heard his voice."

"He was here just now," said Mrs. Mordaunt, "but I made him go on deck, to see how it looks there. Oh, Ellen! I am afraid we shall be lost."

"I hope not, dear mamma," said Ellen, while her own limbs trembled under her, as the storm seemed to increase every moment. Then in a lower tone, she added,—"'Let us trust in the Lord.' Where is Jessie?"

"Here," answered her friend, whom she had not observed sitting by the children's berth watching them. "How sweetly these dear little ones are sleeping."

She came to where Ellen and her mother were, and seeing Mrs. Mordaunt pale and agitated, she said—"Do not look so alarmed, my dear Mrs. Mordaunt. God is with us, fear not."

Not one shade of fear was discernible on Jessie's face: she looked solemnised, but serene. "Here is my father."

Mr. Blackburn came to them, and said—"The storm is very violent, but they have still perfect command of the vessel."

"Where is my husband?" asked Mrs. Mordaunt.

"He is on deck, assisting to fasten some of the ropes: they are glad of assistance. He sent me to you, and will be here directly."

"I am afraid," said Mrs. Mordaunt, looking in Mr. Blackburn's face, "that it is a very bad storm. Are we not in very great danger?"

"The Lord holds the winds in His fists, and the waters in the hollow of His hand," replied Mr. Blackburn. "Fear not, Mrs. Mordaunt, you are as much in his keeping here, as in any other place."

"You may say so, and Jessie," said Mrs. Mordaunt, her tears now bursting forth; "but it is not for me to speak like you."

"Trust in God, dear mamma," whispered Ellen, whose pale face was close to her mother's; "I am sure He will take care of us."

At this moment Robert awoke, and asked what was the matter. Jessie went and told him.

"Ah! Miss Blackburn," he exclaimed; "let me get up."

"Why get up, my dear boy? you are quite as safe there."

"Yes, yes, I know; but only let me get up, and I promise not to make a noise, or seem afraid."

So earnestly did he entreat, that consent was given; and he came and stood by them quite still, and did not utter a single word.

Mr. Mordaunt now came to them, and said—"I

could not get to you before, my dearest Mary, but I will stay with you now. What, you are all up."

"What of the storm, Edward," said Mrs. Mordaunt; "oh, tell me, is there any hope?"

"Hope! yes! I never give up hope. I have been out in fiercer gales than this:" and Mrs. Mordaunt felt reassured.

Just then, a piercing cry arose from a berth near them. It was from a lady—an English fellow-passenger, who was travelling with her maid-servant.

"Oh, what is all this noise," she exclaimed; "will no one tell me."

Mr. Mordaunt went to her, and explained that they were in a severe storm; and, as if to confirm his words, a tremendous crash of thunder was heard. Ellen drew her mother closer to her.

"Oh, we shall all go down," cried the lady; "I know we shall: we shall all be drowned, and then what is to become of me:" and she started up in wild terror.

Mr. Mordaunt became very uneasy, lest her great alarm should increase that of his wife—always nervous, and now more so than ever. He entreated her to be calm.

"But why such extreme terror, madam? you will only deprive yourself of the power to think and act; and our case is not so desperate as you suppose."

"Oh, but I hear the wind, and the thunder, and the shouts of the men, and there,"—and she

paused, as if listening,—“I am certain the men are saying their prayers—and I know these Italians, they never do *that*, unless there is great danger. Oh, our last hour is coming—I know it.”

“And if it is,” said Mr. Blackburn, advancing towards her, “those who look for a glorious eternity, need not fear the gates of death.”

“Death—death,” she cried; her terror growing greater with every roll the ship gave. “Oh! he is the king of terrors. I *cannot*, I will not die,” she exclaimed, starting up in a paroxysm of alarm. “Oh, God! I cannot die.”

As she uttered these words, her eyes glancing wildly round, they fell on the group before her. They were all calm, and were looking at her with anxiety and pity. Little Robert’s large grey eyes were fixed upon her; but, as if his silence put her to shame, she shrunk from his gaze.

“What do you look at me so for, child,” she said; “how is it you do not look frightened?”

Mrs. Mordaunt now for the first time remarked the peculiar stillness of the boy.

“Robert,” she said, “what are you thinking of?” and she drew him close to her.

“I was thinking, mamma,” said Robert, “of the disciples in the little ship on the sea of Galilee, and how Jesus said to the storm—‘Peace, be still, and there was a great calm.’ He is here now, I know, just the same, but I was wishing we could see Him, for I would run to Him, and say—‘Lord, save us, we perish!’”

"Say it, my boy," said Mr. Blackburn, "and He will hear and answer your prayer."

"I have been saying it, sir, over and over," answered the boy, lifting his eyes to Mr. Blackburn's face, "and I thought He would hear me, and that was why I was not afraid."

Every eye present was turned on the child, even his father felt his hopes encouraged by his simple words, and old Dinah ejaculated—"God bless the boy!"

Miss Davis, their frightened fellow-passenger, felt ashamed that one so young should show so much greater fortitude than herself. But fear is all-powerful: and as the vessel gave another tremendous roll, she shrieked aloud. Jessie went to her and covered her with a large shawl (for in her alarm she had started up just as she was); then, kneeling by her side, she took her hand in both of hers, and said, in a low voice—

"Dear Miss Davis, do not tremble so; if you have not found peace with God, lose not a moment, I entreat you, in flying to Christ, the sinner's only refuge. Commit your soul to Him. He has said—'Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out.'"

"Oh, I cannot die," was the only reply, followed by another cry of terror.

Jessie turned with a look of distress towards her father. He immediately came forward, and with the calm authority of a minister of Christ, endeavoured to lead the mind of the poor lady to the

hiding-place from the storm, and the covert from the tempest. He did not tell her she had no cause to fear, for it was evident she was in total ignorance of that which alone could save her soul ; but he took advantage of her present distress of mind, to show her the necessity of a Saviour, and present that Saviour to her, as ready, willing, nay waiting to save her. He spoke distinctly, so as to be heard by all, for he knew that there were some besides Miss Davis present, to whom his words might be profitable, adding—

“Whether the Lord deliver us from this storm or not, we are equally in need of One to shield us from the fiercer storm of the wrath of God ; sooner or later death must come, and in that hour no amiable quality, no natural good dispositions will avail us : ‘all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags ;’ and ‘the Lord is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.’ The blessed Son of God alone was spotless, and He offers to cover us with His robes of righteousness, and wash us in his blood. In Him we are safe for ever. Oh, blessed Lord Jesus,” he continued, raising his eyes with deep reverence—“we come to Thee ; clothe us with Thine own finished righteousness, and be all our salvation and all our desire. In Thee do we trust, oh, leave not our souls destitute.”

How fervently Ellen’s heart responded to this prayer need not be told. She was still standing close to her mother, with one arm encircling her father. His eyes were bent on the ground—and a

deep though stifled sigh, while Mr. Blackburn was speaking, thrilled with joy through Ellen's heart—she had scarcely spoken during the whole time of their great anxiety; at first, indeed, she felt great alarm, but she had reassured her heart by repeating to herself some of the precious Scripture promises that occurred to her memory. She could not, it is true, dispel a certain measure of uneasiness, but it was kept down by the continual repetition of the promise, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Never had these words seemed so full of meaning as now. They were to her like a rock amid the waves. When poor Miss Davis gave way to her terror, Ellen's chief feeling was, thankfulness for that Sovereign grace which had made her to "differ." When Robert expressed his childlike realising faith, the delight she felt made her, for the moment, almost forget her danger. She had caught Jessie's quick glance, too, at Old Dinah's sudden exclamation, and it struck warm to her heart, as, perhaps some result of her former labours. But her father! he it was who principally occupied her thoughts. Why was he so calm? She knew he generally hardly knew what fear was; but then this was *real* danger; death might really be at hand—oh, if it *should* come, where would he be—with *her*? Then she marked his grave expression while Mr. Blackburn was speaking—and then that sigh—what prompted it? what would she give to know.

"I do not think it blows so hard now," said

Mr. Mordaunt, after a pause. "I will go on deck and see."

"Oh, Edward," said Mrs. Mordaunt, "do not leave us."

"Allow me to go, madam," said Mr. Blackburn; "I will only be absent a few minutes." He went to Jessie and folded her in his arms, as though something might occur in his absence which might hinder him from the last embrace.

Then he went quickly from the little cabin. On deck he still found some confusion, but the storm was evidently greatly lessened, and across the horizon streamed a long line of light. He waited till the Captain approached, and then enquired if the danger was past.

"Yes, I think so," replied he: "the sea is already quieter; but such a night I never remember. I never expected we should weather it. The Virgin heard the prayers of my poor men."

"*C'est la main du Seigneur*," said Mr. Blackburn, fervently. "My friend, give the praise to Him alone; for it is to Him only, it is due."

The Captain smiled — "Ah, you are a Protestant. Well, we will not dispute now—Praise be to God, then, if you like that better;" and he passed on.

Mr. Blackburn returned, and gave the party below the news of their safety.

"Thank, God," exclaimed both Mr. and Mrs. Mordaunt; and Ellen, kissing her mother's fore-

head, said, smiling, "You see, dear mamma, our prayers *have* been heard."

Miss Davis burst into tears, and Mr. Blackburn turned to her—"Yes, Miss Davis, **FOR THIS TIME**, please God, we are safe."

Jessie drew Robert to her knee. "Well, my boy," she said, "how are you now?"

"He has said, 'Peace be still,'" whispered he.

"Never forget this night, my child," said Jessie, kissing him affectionately, "and let it teach you to go to Jesus in every danger or trouble. He will always hear you."

"The minute before we separated," said Mr. Blackburn, "we asked a favour, and now shall we omit the thanks for it?"

Then, removing his hat, he offered a few words of praise for their deliverance, and of dedication for the future, to Him who had preserved them. Nor did he forget to ask, that the impressions of that night might not prove as the morning cloud and the early dew.

CHAPTER XIV.

GENOA.

"They remembered not His hand, nor the day when He delivered them from the enemy."—*PSALM lxxviii. 42.*

At eleven o'clock that day they anchored in the port of Genoa. As soon as possible the whole party were lodged in one of those large hotels which overlook the harbour. They were on the first floor, and their rooms opened upon a long terrace, from which large pots of orange trees, in full bloom, sent in a delicious perfume.

The first thing that was done was to put Mrs. Mordaunt and Jessie to bed for some hours. They rested patiently during the hot part of the day; as that lovely evening closed in—all the more beautiful after the late storm—both resisted longer confinement, declaring they felt perfectly well. They all met at dinner, at about half-past four.

"Well, my love," said Mr. Mordaunt, gently touching his wife's cheek, "you look blooming, considering all you have lately gone through. I was afraid you would have been quite ill, espe-

cially after poor Miss Davis's demonstration of alarm."

"Oh, no; I am none the worse," replied she. "Do you know, Edward, it was very extraordinary how, instead of alarming, she made me quite quiet. How glad I am that none of us were so carried away by our fears; yet we were all in equal danger. Even Ellen did not forget herself so far."

"I should hope she knew better," said Mr. Mordaunt, "than to let fear deprive her of presence of mind. She looked rather like a pocket handkerchief, I own;" and he looked, half-smiling, across to the bottom of the table, where she was sitting.

"Now, Edward, do not speak so; she behaved very well, I think. Poor child, though she must have been frightened, she did not even cry"—and Mrs. Mordaunt sent a very affectionate look towards Ellen.

"Well, I must say that for her," said Mr. Mordaunt, "she did behave better than might have been expected."

Ellen received all this kindness and approval with modest and delighted smiles, while both Jessie and her father turned their very kind eyes on her.

"Well, I think," said Mrs. Mordaunt, "it would only be kind to enquire after that poor Miss Davis; will you, Edward, go and ask her how she feels herself this afternoon?"

"Nay, my dear," replied he, "I think it much

more proper for you to go,—if you feel equal to it,” he added, kindly.

“I cannot plead illness as my excuse,” said Mrs. Mordaunt; “though I own I had rather you went in my place. However, perhaps it is as you say. Jessie, will you accompany me?”

“With much pleasure,” answered Jessie; “she is only up stairs, I think. Had we not better go as soon as possible?”

They were soon ready, and, passing up the long broad staircase, were shown into a good-sized room, but which looked out upon the narrow street, instead of the wide and beautiful bay. In a large arm-chair, and a novel in her hands, sat Miss Davis. As our two friends entered she rose, with a heightened colour and some embarrassment in her voice and manner—

“Ah, my dear Mrs. Mordaunt—my dear Miss Blackburn—how do you all do to-day, after”—and she stopped. “Pray come in and sit down.”

They did so, and Mrs. Mordaunt proceeded to make enquiries after Miss Davis’s health, and hoped she had recovered her alarm. Jessie saw at a glance that this allusion to the scene of the last night was by no means agreeable to Miss Davis; but Mrs. Mordaunt did not perceive it, and went on.

“We were all so sorry to see you so much alarmed; you must be a very nervous person.”

As this was put something in the shape of a question, Miss Davis laughed a little, and answered—

"Yes, I suppose I am; it was a dreadful night. I believe," she continued, "I ought to apologise for having alarmed you all; you must excuse me. I suppose, having been awakened with a start, and being of a delicate constitution, I had not full command of my mind. I am myself again now. Have you ever seen this, Miss Blackburn?" and she took up the book she had been reading. "It is rather light reading, you see; but really I felt in need of a little diversion of thought. Are you fond of novels, Mrs. Mordaunt?"

Now, Mrs. Mordaunt did sometimes enjoy a novel; but she was disgusted with Miss Davis's complete putting away of all the strong feelings of the previous night. As she generally said exactly what she thought, she very coldly replied—

"I have not had any time for reading to-day; if I had, I should have endeavoured to select a book more in accordance with my present feelings. I should have thought that your nerves, Miss Davis, had been too much discomposed for novel reading to-day."

Miss Davis coloured again, and looked uncomfortable; so she turned to Jessie.

"And your papa, Miss Blackburn, how is he to-day? Pray present my respectful compliments to him; he was exceedingly obliging—a clergyman, I suppose?"

"Yes," replied Jessie.

"So I imagined by his appearance and language. But I have come from Nice, where I

believe you also spent the winter; and I was a regular church-goer, I do assure you, yet I never had the pleasure of hearing him preach."

"No," replied Jessie; "my father is a member of the Church of Scotland, and the clergyman at Nice belongs to the Anglican Church."

Miss Davis drew herself up, and said, in a very decided manner—

"I am a staunch member of the Church of England."

"We all belong, I hope, to the Church of Christ," said Jessie, calmly. "Names are nothing in His sight, and in heaven there will be none."

Miss Davis made no reply, and soon they rose to go. As they took leave, Jessie said—

"My father will have the pleasure of calling on you to-morrow; he thought you might be fatigued to-day, or he would have come with us."

To this Miss Davis made no answer, but a very cold bow. She, however, offered her hand to Mrs. Mordaunt, and they left the room.

That evening was moonlight, and the gentlemen and Ellen went for a stroll in the town. Mrs. Mordaunt and Jessie were sitting together, near the open terrace door, and the moonbeams streamed brightly into the room, and over Jessie's face, as she sat on a low stool close to Mrs. Mordaunt, who was half-resting on the sofa. Jessie's eyes were fixed on that glorious sky, and her heart was soaring beyond it, when Mrs. Mordaunt said—

"Now, Jessie, I have something to ask you; will you answer it?"

"If I can, dear Mrs. Mordaunt," was Jessie's reply.

"Yes, you can. I want exceedingly to have something explained to me that passed when we were calling on Miss Davis. She asked, why she had not heard your father preach, and you said he belonged to the Church of Scotland. Miss Davis, I thought, looked very odd, as if that changed matters very much, and I want you to tell me why. You always went to church at Nice, did you not?"

"Yes," replied Jessie, "for the Gospel was preached there; and wherever that is done, my father and I are thankful to go. Poor Miss Davis, I suppose, calls herself a High-Churchwoman, and looks upon all not belonging to the same church as herself as heretics. But never mind that, dear Mrs. Mordaunt; as I said to her, what does it matter if we all belong to the one and universal Church of Christ?"

"But stop, Jessie," said Mrs. Mordaunt, "I do not understand; I thought we were all Protestants."

Jessie could not help smiling. "Yes, indeed," she replied, "that glorious name belongs to us all; but I am Scotch you know, and you are English; and the outward forms of worship, as well as government of the established Church in the two countries, differ. In one thing, my dear friend, we agree, and

that is—the Word of God is our only rule of faith ; and if we keep to *that*, the rest matters little.”

“Well,” said Mrs. Mordaunt, “I never heard before that there was any difference : but I really cannot see that it signifies. I am sure, whatever Miss Davis’s opinions may be, it would be well if they supported her better in times of danger. How different from you, my dear Jessie.”

“Dear Mrs. Mordaunt,” said Jessie, “it was not the difference in our churches that kept me calm, while poor Miss Davis was so afraid. Besides, you know, for me it signified but little : I have had a respite, but at the most it can only be a short one.”

“And how calm you look, Jessie. Well, I own I was not afraid to die : my anxiety was to have my husband and children near me ; they were all there, and I was satisfied to think we should die together.”

Jessie felt embarrassed as Mrs. Mordaunt spoke. She knew what a poor ground of comfort this was, and yet it was very difficult to reply. She looked sweetly at her, and said—

“The servant of Christ need not die alone, dear Mrs. Mordaunt. There is One who will come to him with His rod and staff, and bear him safely through the valley of the shadow of death. *With* Him we cannot be alone ; *without* Him we *must* be.”

“Oh, Jessie, sometimes I wonder whether He will save *me*, for I know how full of faults I am ; but I try hard against them, indeed I do.”

"It is well, my dear friend, that you feel this; 'they that be whole,' or think themselves whole, 'need not the physician, but they that be sick.'"

"I often think about these things now, Jessie, though I dare say no one thinks I ever do. I cannot understand how persons who have known any trouble can feel that this world is every thing, and yet how many *do*. They mix in gaiety, and they talk and laugh, and try to forget their affliction, and never think of another life beyond this. I cannot be quite happy now. I never think of my beautiful baby, without sighing for the world to which he is gone; and when I am busy and working, my thoughts are often employed about the passage of Scripture I have been reading, for I *do* read the Bible, and that every day. I know most people do not do this, and then I hope that perhaps I am one whom God loves. What do you say, Jessie? I would not talk to other people as I talk to you, but I can depend upon you to give me a true answer."

Jessie hesitated. "It is very difficult, my dear friend, to answer for another person. You may, however, safely believe that God *loves you*, for He loves all those who wish to love Him. I do not, however, think you are wise in comparing yourself with other people, for two reasons. One is, that as we cannot see into their hearts, we cannot decide what they really feel; and a stronger one still is, that this is not the rule which God has given us to measure ourselves by."

"But, my dear Jessie," said Mrs. Mordaunt, "I

think we can very plainly see what other people are by what they *do*. How much pleasure they take in the follies of this world, and in talking about trifling things. You could not persuade me that they think much about religion, or care about it."

"I think," said Jessie, "it would matter very little to us whether other people were more or less sick than ourselves, if we ourselves were sick and not likely to recover."

"But do you think that of *me*, Jessie?" said Mrs. Mordaunt, earnestly. "Oh! then I fear there is no hope for me."

"No, dear Mrs. Mordaunt, I did not say *that*; but I wish you to leave off comparing yourself with other persons. Since you ask me, I must say what I believe to be the truth. You and I, and every one, without exception, are suffering from a disease, whose end is death—*death temporal, death spiritual, and death eternal*. If we take God's law for our standard, and compare ourselves with *it*, we shall find this to be the case. Which of us has not broken His commandments over and over again?"

"I have no great opinion of myself," said Mrs. Mordaunt, "but I am certain there are several of those commandments I have never broken at all. 'Thou shalt not kill;' 'Thou shalt not steal;' I have never broken these."

"But these are not *all* the commandments; and if we were to keep the whole law, and yet 'offend in one point,' we should be 'guilty of all.' Have you and I, dear Mrs. Mordaunt, loved God above

every thing else ? Have we never broken His holy day ? Have we always spoken the exact truth ? Have we always been strictly obedient to those set over us ? Have we never wished for what was not ours ? This is merely taking the commandments in their most general meaning ; and what can we say to this ? I, for one, can only say, in the language of your Prayer Book, ‘ I have done the things which I ought not to have done, and I have left undone the things which I ought to have done, and there is no health in me.’ ”

For a minute Mrs. Mordaunt was silent, then she resumed—

“ Then you think we must all be lost for ever, for having sometimes done wrong ? I think God is too merciful to punish his creatures for small sins.”

“ The Bible makes no such distinctions as these,” replied Jessie ; “ sin must be punished. God has said it.”

“ But Jesus Christ died on the cross to take away that punishment,” said Mrs. Mordaunt ; “ did He not ? ”

“ Yes, indeed,” said Jessie, “ He did suffer and die for sinners, in His great mercy and love. But, my dear Mrs. Mordaunt, do you not see at once the two different methods of salvation we have been talking of. The one is, by keeping the commandment of God, and that perfectly ; which we can never do. The other is by depending on Him who kept that law, and suffered the punishment of sin in our stead. The reason I asked you to take

the law for your standard was, that you might directly see how useless it is to imagine we can ever attain salvation by keeping it. Are you not convinced of that?"

"Of course, I know Jesus Christ alone can save sinners;" answered Mrs. Mordaunt. "I know too well my own unworthiness to forget that. But I am afraid after all He does not mean to save *me*, Jessie; for though I try all I can, I feel more and more my own weakness to do what is right every day:" and tears came into Mrs. Mordaunt's eyes.

"Dear Mrs. Mordaunt," said Jessie, earnestly. "Did you not this moment say you believed that Jesus died to save sinners? If you feel yourself a sinner, then it was just such as you He came to save."

"But how can you be sure of that?" asked Mrs. Mordaunt. "I know very well, Jessie, for Ellen told me so, that you believe *some* are elected to everlasting life, and some are not. Now, perhaps, I am not one of the elect?" And Mrs. Mordaunt looked steadily at Jessie, for the fact was, that Ellen's remark, which had come out in the course of conversation a few days before, had surprised and displeased her mother, and she had determined ever since to ask Jessie her real opinion. Jessie knew all the endless and profitless discussion to which the subject might give rise, if argued against in a prejudiced and cavilling spirit: so she quietly said—

"I cannot tell, Mrs. Mordaunt, whether this

is the case or not, but I can tell you, that to every sinner, Jesus says, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.'"

"You think I am *not* one of the chosen," said Mrs. Mordaunt, with some bitterness of manner. "I can see that."

"Mrs. Mordaunt, you astonish me," said Jessie, warmly. "Did I not say I could not tell? Nay, if I were to make a surmise on the subject, it would rather be that you were, for the very nature of our conversation shows that you do feel an interest in these important truths; and I would fain receive that as a token for good. Let me entreat you," she continued, taking Mrs. Mordaunt's hand kindly in hers, "let me entreat you, not to puzzle your mind with a question you never can answer in a direct and positive manner. Can you or I look into the Book of God's Eternal Counsels, and see whether our names are written there?"

"And yet, Jessie, you believe yourself one of the elect."

"Not because the secret decrees of God have been revealed to me, dearest Mrs. Mordaunt. No angel has whispered to me, 'your name is written in heaven, in the Book of Life,' but because I have read in his written Word, the Bible, that every one who comes for salvation to the Saviour is one of His chosen people, for none can so come except the Father draw him. By His great mercy I have been enabled so to come; and, therefore, in all humility, I hope and trust that I am one of that

blessed number"—and as Jessie spoke, she raised her eyes to the moonlight sky with a look of grateful joy.

Mrs. Mordaunt looked at her, and could not mistake that happy, yet lowly expression. "Ah, Jessie," she said, "I wish I could say the same."

"And why not, my dear friend?" said Jessie, again turning to her, and speaking with great earnestness. "'Ho every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters;' this is the glorious invitation; oh, believe me,"—and then she hesitated,—“but why should I not testify of His goodness? *believe* me, His words are truth. I have found them so. 'He is the Faithful and True Witness.' I took him at his word, and not one thing has ever failed me of all that He spoke. Let me invite you to do the same, and you too will find Him true"

Mrs. Mordaunt was deeply struck with the earnest manner of her young friend, and she would have replied, but at this moment the walkers returned.

"Well," said Mr. Mordaunt to his wife, "did you accomplish your visit to Miss Davis; had she recovered herself?"

"Yes," answered, Mrs. Mordaunt; "she was perfectly well. You would never have supposed she had been lately so much alarmed. I never was so astonished in my life."

"Ah! my dear Mrs. Mordaunt," said, Mr. Blackburn, "in the moment of danger, He is looked to, who is forgotten when that danger is

past. Poor lady," he added, sadly, "I will go and see her, perhaps she will listen to a word from a clergyman."

"No! I am afraid not," said Mrs. Mordaunt; "as soon as she heard you were a Scotchman she looked quite alarmed."

"A Scotchman!" and he looked to Jessie for an explanation. Jessie smiled, and told him what had passed.

"I will try, nevertheless," said he.

Mrs. Mordaunt's conjecture, however, proved true. When Mr. Blackburn's card was sent in, Miss Davis declined receiving him, pleading a previous engagement.

They remained about a week in Genoa, visiting the palaces and churches for which that city is renowned. At the end of that time they hired two carriages, and started for Spezzia. In order to divide the party more equally, Ellen and Robert were placed in Mr. Blackburn's carriage, to the delight of all that carriage contained. That beautiful road, who shall describe? Suffice it to say, that few scenes in Europe can surpass it. Ellen had never been so much with Mr. Blackburn, and she found him a most interesting companion. He sought out, and told them the history of every old town, every ruined fortress, they saw; he made them notice each picturesque scene, each remarkable point of view, each rainbow-tinted cloud. He (with his delighted companion, little Robert,) gathered them beautiful nosegays of mountain

heath, of scented myrtle, and spreading fern, and brought fresh draughts of water from many a rocky spring. But better than this, he had for all some Scriptural association; from all he drew some spiritual and appropriate lesson. Then he had stories to tell—some from the olden time, of those who 'mid the mountain clefts, sought refuge from their persecutors, and worshipped there the God of their fathers in spirit and in truth; some from the scenes of his own boyhood, and interesting accounts of his early and well-beloved missionary days—first as a joyous and enterprising youth, in the ardour of a heart just consecrated to its God, and then with more matured but not less ardent feelings, leading Jessie's mother as his young and lovely bride to his lowly hut amid the garden islands of the South Pacific—soon made doubly dear by the sounds of infant glee. Then he would describe, till Ellen's heart beat with sympathy, how for *her* sake he used to pray, day and night, that other labourers might be sent to fill a place he would not leave vacant, even to save *her* life; and how the white speck on the far sea grew into a large and commodious vessel, bringing no less than *six* in answer to his prayers—how their little dwelling was filled with presents from a grateful people—and how his heart well-nigh failed him as for the last time he preached to them “the unsearchable riches of Christ.” All this, and much more, would he tell, while Jessie's hand gently pressing his, and Ellen's swelling heart and earnest



looks, and Robert's open eye of wonder, testified the interest with which he was heard.

"I'll be a missionary, when I'm a man," was the inward resolve of Robert's heart—a resolve which he did not fail to tell Mr. Blackburn, the next hill they ascended together.

"Ah! my boy," replied his kind friend, "you little know the privations and dangers a missionary has to undergo."

"I don't mind danger," was Robert's answer.

"Perhaps you think not, *now*," said Mr. Blackburn; "but even if that were nothing, let me tell you that indifference to danger is not the only preparation needed to make a missionary. He must be one who feels *himself* what he is preaching to them; he must himself love the Saviour he is offering to others, and be fired with holy zeal to support him in his work. If you feel that, my boy, *go*, and the Lord be with you."

Robert's sweet clear eye was fixed on Mr. Blackburn, while he gravely and solemnly answered, "*I will never go*, sir, unless I feel *that*."

But it was not only for amusement that Mr. Blackburn talked to his young companions. Ellen found courage to ask him many questions which he never failed to answer so kindly and satisfactorily, always drawing forth his old well-worn black covered Bible, that she lost all hesitation in opening her mind freely to him. The astonishing thing to her was, that he seemed to understand exactly all her own particular doubts and difficulties, which

she had scarcely ventured to detail even to Jessie from very shame. It need not be told how much she enjoyed the journey; and Jessie's delight was no less at perceiving how Ellen was learning to love her father.

They travelled all day, only resting for dinner, and slept at one of those lovely little towns by the sea-coast. The next morning they started afresh, and crossed a ridge of the Appennines, and again rested in the middle of the day. Early in that afternoon they came in sight of the bay of Spezzia. The descent was steep, and they swept swiftly though carefully down the hill. The inn they put up at was in a long and narrow street, with no very inviting aspect: it was not, however, very far from the sea, and as they hoped to be on the water as much as the heat and the health of the invalids would allow, they cared less for the situation. Ellen felt quite sorry as she got out of the carriage, she had so thoroughly enjoyed the journey. It had, however, done her good both in body and mind, and she silenced her discontent by reflecting that the ordering of every event of her life was in the hands of her Almighty Friend, and had been so decreed long, long ago.

CHAPTER XV.

THE PIC-NIC AT FIASCHERING.

Thou art, O Lord, the life and light
 Of all this wondrous world we see ;
 Its ray by day, its smile by night,
 Are but a radiance caught from Thee.
 Where'er we turn Thy glories shine,
 And all things fair and bright are thine.

MOORE.

It would be a difficult task to recount all that occurred while they were at Spezzia. The scenery of that lovely bay is indescribable ; or, at any rate, it needs a more skilful pen than mine to describe it. They went out boating a great deal, and visited each spot that struck their fancy. More than once, taking a basket of provisions and starting early, they sailed to some one of those little quiet bays, which, among noble rocks, seem to invite the beauty-loving stranger to repose and meditation ; and there they spent the day. Jessie for awhile seemed to improve ; and the deceptive colour in her cheeks, and her own cheerful spirits, beguiled her friends into hopes that had but too little foundation. She was fully aware of her own danger, but though it solemnised, it did not sadden

her. Her rapturous love of the beautiful, rendered the gulf of Spezzia a most congenial spot; and often, as they sailed over the glassy waters, she would gaze into the lovely sunset sky, as one who knew her home was there.

One day they sailed right across the bay on one of their excursions. It was a bright summer morning, but the awning of the boat kept off the intense heat of the sun. They passed the numerous inlets which so characterise the scene, and the old martial-looking fortresses, which, like guardians of the waters, stand on each rocky promontory, till the wider bay of Lerici opened on their view. Here, all seemed life and activity; for the waters near the shore were in several parts dotted with little boats, going to and fro, and in the sheltered harbour were the tall masts of many vessels. Excepting, however, in this part of the gulf, all was still; and every thing, even the very fir-clad rocks, and olive-covered hills, seemed sleeping.

Leaving these behind, they sailed past the long peninsula, which appears to form the enclosing limit of the bay. Here the rocks assumed a more imposing aspect. The wind was rather fresh, and the swelling waves, which heaved up their little boat, rolled onwards, dashing their white spray over the rugged shore, and boomed as they swept in among the hollow caves.

One of the boatmen pointed out to them some

very curious, isolated masses of rock, of shapes the most grotesque, which stood like transformed giants in waters of the deepest blue.

"Oh, Ellen! what are those?" cried little Annie, as they rowed round some of those strange monsters (for Robert was too full of wonder to speak at all). "I am sure I saw something move. Yes, yes! I see it again; it is a bird; and there—is not that its nest?"

"It is, indeed," said Mr. Mordaunt; "they are swallows, who have built their nests in these curious rocks. Do they not seem as if some violent convulsion of nature had rent them asunder? Magnificent!"

"Magnificent, indeed!" said Mr. Blackburn. "Yes, if yonder fertile hills, and that unclouded sky, declare that God is good, these giant rocks proclaim that He is great."

"Jessie," said Ellen, in a low voice, "do you think it possible these curious rocks could have been among the number of those which were rent at our Lord's crucifixion; or was that rending confined to the rocks near Jerusalem?"

"I cannot say, dear Ellen; probably they are the result of volcanic action, the traces of which are seen so frequently in this country; or, perhaps, they were hurled from yonder mountains by the waters of the Deluge; for the face of the earth must have been changed, when 'the fountains of the great deep were broken up.' We

read, that 'the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.' Such an expression implies a complete change."

Another promontory was followed by another bay, at the farther side of which lay a strip of sandy shore, and there the boatmen rowed them. One of them leapt into the shallow sea, and brought a glass of water as fresh and pure as ever mortal drank, and drawn from a spring close to the sea-side; so close, indeed, that in stormy weather it was rendered unfit for use, by the salt waves breaking into it.

"Do not be afraid of tasting it, Miss Blackburn," said Mr. Mordaunt, handing the glass to Jessie. "It is quite innocent, I assure you, though the spring is called Fiaschering; or, the little flask. It derives its name from its refreshing qualities, but I will answer for its being no more than old Adam's wine."

As Jessie, smiling, took the glass, they heard voices near, and looked round. They proceeded from two lads who came across the little promontory, by a winding path, with pitchers in their hands, which they had brought to fill at the spring. Mr. Mordaunt enquired of the boatmen where they were from, and was told from Telara, a village some distance off, the wells of that place being dried up in consequence of the long drought. "This spring," they added, "is never dry." The beautiful emblem this afforded of the never-failing love of Him, who says, "If any

man thirst let him come unto me and drink," was felt by both Jessie and Ellen. It was, however, a silent thought, and Ellen's meditations were interrupted by the sudden grasp of her father's hand.

"Come," said he, with pretended sternness; "get out of your brown study now, if you please; do not you see Mr. Blackburn waiting for you?" And in another minute she was on the shore by his side, and with him and her brother and sister climbed up the little hill, which was so green that it almost looked like a plantation. They stood on the top of that pleasant tongue of land while the rest of the party sailed round; and Annie shouted and waved her handkerchief, and Ellen her light scarf, as the boat passed below. Though the breeze blew fresh in their faces, the sun beat very hotly; and while Ellen herself could not resist following Mr. Blackburn, who had walked to the edge of the hill, overlooking the sea, she turned to desire Annie to remain under the shade of the trees. But though she followed him she did not speak to him, for there was something in the expression of his face which prevented all intrusion. He might be thinking of that wide expanse, and of that dim and distant land far away, as if on the other side of the sea; or, he might be thinking of Jessie, and of those who had preceded her to the world of spirits. Whatever it was, she could not, and did not, interrupt him. Presently, he turned and

saw her. He smiled and said, "Had we not better be joining our friends?"

They returned to where Annie was very impatiently waiting them.

"Where is Robert?" asked Mr. Blackburn.

They looked, but could see him no where. Where could he be? Could he have fallen over the rocks? Ellen began to be very uneasy. They looked over the place where they had stood, but in vain.

"Can he have run down to the others, sir?" asked Ellen, who was looking very pale.

"Perhaps—hush! what is that?" They listened, and a childish voice, borne by the winds, struck upon their ears. They could not see where he was, nor was he the least aware his voice could reach them; it would not, but for the favouring breeze. He was reciting one of Watts's hymns—

"I sing the Almighty power of God," &c.

He went on and finished the hymn, and Mr. Blackburn, stooping over, pointed the little fellow out to Ellen. He had climbed down the rocks to a little ledge, some considerable way below them, and stood there, the wind blowing his fair curls.

"He thinks himself alone; we will not disturb that belief," said Mr. Blackburn. "Let us retreat a little, and call him."

They did so; then Mr. Blackburn, looking over, held out his hand.

"My boy, you should not venture alone into dangerous places; besides, you frightened us."

"Did I?" said he, looking ashamed and sorry; and he coloured.

"Well, never mind," said Ellen, "you are safe now—do not go down such rocks again; let us go to mamma. Without further delay they hastened to the little quiet shore, where the party were just landing.

It was not long before the boat was moored, and they were seated comfortably under the shade of the rock; the children, with shouts of delight, watching the bubbles caused by showers of the gravelly stones, which they tossed into the waves as far as their little arms had power to throw them. Ellen sat near Jessie, looking anxiously at her; for that morning she had, for the first time, remarked a look of deep sadness over her usually cheerful face. She was silent now; but as Ellen drew closer than ever towards her, and at last put her hand gently in hers, she turned towards her, with a smile.

"Ellen, darling," she said, "how you look at me;" and in a moment her usual manner returned. The day passed very pleasantly; boating, rambling, chatting, and eating, occupied the time. The afternoon came. The party all set off, excepting Jessie and Ellen, Dinah and Willie, to explore the country near. The two former had sat silent some little time, when Jessie said—

"Ellen, I should like to go up that little hill

where you stood as we passed round; will *you* come?"

"Certainly; dear Jessie; but you are not strong enough; the ascent is rather steep."

"No, it will not tire me; I can do it. Let me, dear Ellen, *try* at least."

Ellen was too much pleased to make further objections. Jessie felt stronger, then; this was delightful indeed. They went slowly up, and ere long stood on the promontory. It was not hot now, but it was not exactly cool either. The air was of that peculiar warmth so remarkable in Southern climes—fresh, yet not chill. The sun's slanting rays streamed over the sea, and lighted up the eastern hills; and the little village of Telara, built actually upon the rocks, was glowing with a red hue. The two girls sat down together, looking round upon the whole fair scene. As Jessie did not speak, Ellen was silent also; but she watched her friend's face, and she observed that she looked sad. Presently a large tear swelled in her eye, and rolled down her cheek—then another. Ellen drew closer to her.

"Dear Jessie, what is distressing you? what brings these tears?" and Ellen's handkerchief wiped them away.

"Thank you, dearest," said Jessie, taking her hand affectionately in hers. "You think me very foolish, I am afraid; but it is all over now."

"And what was it?" asked Ellen.

"Thoughts only, dear Ellen. Why should I detail them to you?"

"Because I should like to hear them," answered Ellen. "Dearest Jessie, it is so unusual to see you sad, that I cannot help being uneasy."

"The cause was this, dearest Ellen. I know I am very ill; I know the progress of consumption too well not to be fully aware of that. Last night I could not sleep—thought was too busy. My father! my brother! I must leave them! Oh, Ellen, it was an hour for the powers of darkness. I thought I could not go and leave my father, and in a foreign land. The morning came, and with it better feelings. I had done wrong. I had indulged unbelieving, ungrateful thoughts; peace of mind would not return. I was ashamed and grieved. We started this morning, as you know; but I could not enjoy, till we sailed under those noble rocks, and Annie pointed out the swallows' nests. With the sight of them came the thought of One who, like that rock, shelters all who come to Him; and I said—

"Rock of Ages! cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."

Ellen, do you know that hymn? It just suited me. I said it all, and I felt that I was pardoned. I grew gradually happier again, till we sat down here. How beautiful it all appears. Then I felt again how sinful I had been, and bitter self-reproving thoughts saddened me. Does He take care

of those swallows, and will He not take care of my father? Yes, I know he will. There, Ellen, I have told you."

"And I love you more dearly than ever, my darling Jessie. But why do you talk of death? You are better; see how much stronger you are."

"Am I?" said Jessie, smiling. "No; I am certain it is not far off. Yesterday I persuaded my father to write to James, and ask him to come to us—to *him*."

Ellen looked at Jessie for a moment, and, then, burying her face in her knees, she wept aloud. It was now Jessie's turn to console.

"Ellen, my beloved, my own dear friend, you must not—indeed, you must not. We shall meet again, you know."

"Not if there are different places in heaven, Jessie; you will be far higher than I can be."

"Who did Jesus say was greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" asked Jessie. "He that was *least*, I think. Besides, dear Ellen, you must not picture to yourself a material world, with actual places assigned. Do not vex yourself about this; you will be near the *best* Friend, Ellen—He who was nailed to the cross for you."

"Oh, yes, that is a delightful thought, Jessie; but, tell me, will your brother be able to come?"

"Yes, I believe he will. I know he has a friend who will probably be able to take his place. James is engaged to be married shortly; but he will put it off for a few weeks, I know. I would

not have asked this but for so urgent a reason. My father *must* not be left alone."

She paused; then presently turning to Ellen, she said—"Now, shall we get up and go quite to that edge?"

They went and stood together, looking on the scene.

"What is that dim and shadowy island far away to the left, Ellen?"

"The hills of Leghorn, I believe," answered Ellen; "they are particularly clear this evening."

"Ah," said Jessie, "they have a message for me;" and she repeated—

"My Father's house on high!
Home of my soul! how near
At times to faith's aspiring eye
Thy golden gates appear.

"Ah, then, my spirit faints
To reach the land I love;
The blest inheritance of saints—
Jerusalem above."

"Jessie! what is that?"

Jessie turned to her, and said—

"For ever with the Lord!
Amen! so let it be;
Life from the dead is in that word—
'Tis immortality."

Ellen started. "Oh, Jessie, what is that? Tell me quick."

"A beautiful hymn," answered Jessie, who had quite recovered her usual cheerfulness; "but I think I ought to ask *you*, why you started and changed colour so?"

"Oh, Jessie, when I heard that hymn last I was—I do not know what I was."

"You know what you are *now*," said Jessie, smiling.

"Ah! *do I?* I hope I am not what I was *then*. How strange it is, Jessie, to think of all that has happened to me. Do you know, there *was* a time when I doubted everything."

"The truth of religion, do you mean?"

"Yes; I was at school then. It did not last long though. When my little brother died, I wished so much to believe he was in heaven, that I could not bear my doubt any longer. But I knew nothing then; I heard that verse the first day I saw Mr. Maxwell; it was on a tombstone, near Henry's. I could not even tell the children what it meant; but I feel its meaning in my heart *now*, and I understand what it was *he* felt, too."

"Who is *he*?"

"Mr. Maxwell. He read the words, and seemed so touched by them. I do not know that I ever thought again of them from that day till now, and it quite made me start. Now I could almost wish the time was come for *me* to be 'for ever with the Lord.'"

"You must walk by *faith* a little longer, dear Ellen."

"I feel as if *now* I might be safe; but, perhaps, in years to come I may fall away."

"Ellen, my dear child! how you speak. 'Faithful is He that called you, who also will do it.'"

Your salvation is not in your own hands. *He will not let you go.*"

They slowly returned to their friends, who had just finished their walk. Evening was now closing in fast, so they re-entered the boat, and once more set sail. The breeze, which blew so fresh in the morning, had quite subsided; all was still and calm, and they sailed slowly across the bay. The sunset-tints gradually deepened into twilight, and then the rays of the early moon sparkled on the sea. To the western side of the bay of Lerici were anchored two fishing vessels—one under the shade of the fortress, and the other exactly in the shade of the dancing moon-beams. As they passed, the voices of the crew were heard in a song, whose notes were mellowed by the air and distance. It came in gentle cadence, and they desired the men to cease rowing that they might listen. Presently the song ceased and all was still, save a solitary grasshopper that chirped among the fir-trees. The silence was such as might be felt, nay, almost *heard*, and all were impressed by it. To Ellen's heart there was something almost awful in that stillness; it was as if they were enwrapt in the presence of the unseen God, and she whispered to herself—

"Jesus! Thou our guardian be,
Sweet it is to trust in Thee."

"Mamma," said Annie, after they had proceeded some way, "I see the lighthouse"—pointing to the round island-hill, on which gleamed the

beacon light. "It is bright, but not quite so clear as when there is no moon."

"But it *is* clear, Annie," said Robert. "It is like the light on the wicket-gate, to which Christian ran with his burden on his back. Oh!" he added, with a sigh, "how I wish it was *that* light."

"Why so?" asked his mother, who, at his earnest solicitation, had read his beloved book. "What would you do if it were?"

"Oh, mamma," said he, eagerly, "I would run, and run, till I got there."

"Take care," said his father, in a jesting voice—who, partly by Robert's quotations, and partly by the pictures, which on Sunday evening he had looked over, knew pretty well the principal contents of the book—"you will have a tumble into the Slough of Despond."

The jesting tone in which this was said was wholly lost upon Robert.

"But I would look for the steps, papa. Christian need not have fallen in if he had minded what he was doing."

"And how did he get out?" asked Mr. Mor-daunt, in the same voice as before.

"Oh, a kind man came and pulled him out."

"And whom does that man represent?" asked Mr. Blackburn, anxious to put an end to all trifling with so solemn a subject.

"His name was 'Help,'" answered Robert. "Oh, I know who *he* was; he was Jesus Christ."

"*Help!*" continued Mr. Mordaunt, his merry mood still prevailing; "but there was a Mr. Evangelist, if I recollect right."

"Yes, yes;" said Robert, whose love for his book would have kept him for ever talking of it; "but he was not the same, papa. It was *He* who told Christian *first*, where to run."

"And who was *He*?" asked his father.

"A Clergyman! a Minister!" said Robert, and then springing between Mr. Blackburn's knees, he exclaimed, "*You are our Evangelist.*"

His friend pressed him warmly to his heart. His father laughed heartily at his energetic movement and personal application. But seeming to feel that the subject would not bear further jesting, he changed it, by calling their attention to the disappearance of the lighthouse, which proved them to be half-way between the bay of Lerici and Spezzia.

The air was so balmy, they felt no chill; in little more than half-an-hour they landed on the stone pier, and walked slowly to the inn.

CHAPTER XVI.

PORTO VENERE.

"Man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep."

JOB xiv. 12.

THOUGH Jessie had made no secret to Ellen of her own opinion about her state, yet her young friend did not, could not, realise it except at intervals. Perhaps Mr. Blackburn himself did not; for to all appearance Jessie was better. They continued their excursions, and there was not one who did not feel attached to the lovely bay. Mr. Mordaunt especially enjoyed it. His natural love of scenery, and of freedom from the usual ceremonies of society, made him take particular delight in the kind of life they at present led. Mrs. Mordaunt liked it, because her husband did, and the rest for reasons better felt than described. Ellen continued her office of teacher, and with more and more success. Robert, indeed, could scarcely be called her pupil, for Mr. Blackburn claimed him daily. And the child evidently was no where so happy, as when with him and Jessie.

The day before they left for Leghorn, they set off for a last sail on the calm sea. The sun was under a cloud, and starting early, they coasted those

seven deep and sheltered harbours on the right side of the bay, and passing on between the main land and the fir and olive-clad island to the left, sailed out into the open sea. The ancient town of Porto Venere, and its projecting church, had often excited their interest, and after inspecting with delight the magnificent rocks which form the background of that curious island, they returned for another look at the old ruins. They had often wished to land, and Jessie observing that no one seconded little Annie's plea of a former promise that they should some day accomplish that wish, guessed it was on her account they hesitated now."

"Let us land if you please, Mr. Mordaunt," she said, "we go to-morrow, and I should be sorry not to see this strange old place."

"Are you able, Miss Blackburn?" enquired Mr. Mordaunt, "for let me tell you there is a long tiresome street to walk through. Your father, Robert, and I, have explored it before, and as we have a journey before us, perhaps it would be as well not to waste your strength upon a profitless exertion."

"*Profitless*, do you call it, Mr. Mordaunt?" said Jessie, with a smile, "I cannot stop to discuss that point now, though I entirely disagree with you. Come, let us land, I *am* strong enough."

He shook his head doubtingly; but handed her out with great care. Jessie leaning on his arm, Mrs. Mordaunt on Mr. Blackburn's, they passed

through a strange old gateway, adorned with half-effaced inscriptions, and walked up the very long and narrow street. Women sitting twisting bobbins at the doors, looked up as they passed; and little children with old faces (nothing looked young in this ancient town), gathered round in wonder, and followed them in a whispering crowd. They emerged at length from the dwellings of the men of a present generation, and walked through those of generations long passed away. The low half-fallen walls told that the present thoroughfare led through what had once been houses; perhaps some Roman state-room, some scene of festive heathen mirth. The stony fragments of staircase, arch, and gateway, descended to the very water's edge, all deserted now, save by children sporting among the rubbish, or by some solitary fisherman, cooking his frugal dinner at a little smoking fire; while a lonely fowl perched on what had once been a window, looked like the very spirit of the ruins.

Arrived at the further end of the long open walk, they mounted some very wide steps, and stood inside the curious little church, which from the sea forms such a picturesque point of view. *Without*, its black and white walls seemed still in good and church-like condition, but within, all was ruin and desolation. The gentlemen and little Robert went about exploring, leaving the ladies and Annie looking out from an open spot upon the wide sea view. There they watched the sun

in its glory, descend and dip below the watery horizon, a sight they could not usually enjoy from the position of the mountains, which almost encircled the bay. Now they could see the broad expanse of the open Mediterranean, and could trace the long line of coast far on towards Genoa. Soon, however, they descended again, and entered the former temple of Venus. A raised place at one end marked the spot, where in its so-called Christian days, the altar had been placed, and where perhaps, in antecedent times, the sacrifices of pagan worship had been offered.

"How sad it makes one feel," said Jessie, "to be in such a spot as this; to think of the mistaken worship there rendered by thousands of immortal souls."

"Jessie," said Mrs. Mordaunt, "now tell me — for I have a great respect for your opinion, and Ellen and I have had a great many disputes about it. The poor heathen who used to say their prayers in this church, and knew no better, how could they help themselves? Tell me, Jessie, what do you think of them? Do you not think God is too merciful to punish them all in hell for ever, though they did not know all that you and I know about Jesus Christ? I know Ellen thinks He *will*, but *I* cannot be so uncharitable. I dare say many of them were a great deal better than I am. Now, Jessie, you must give me your opinion: Ellen will listen to *you*, though she will not listen to *me*."

Jessie looked smiling at Ellen, on whose face was an expression half-amused, half-vexed.

"Now do not consult Ellen's eyes," said Mrs. Mordaunt, with her hand drawing back Jessie's face to herself; "tell me truly what you think: Ellen is a child, and does not know what she thinks."

"My dear Mrs. Mordaunt, why ask me such a question? I had rather not, nay, I cannot answer it."

"No, no, Jessie, you must answer me—I insist you will,—for now we are talking about it, I must tell you that Ellen's father cannot bear the uncharitable opinions she sometimes gives forth. I am sure they are not yours—now are they, Jessie?"

"How shall I answer you, my dear Mrs. Mordaunt," said Jessie: "far be it from me to condemn *all* in one sweeping word. And yet I will own, that in thinking of those who once inhabited the dwellings we have just past through, rendering them alive with voice and action, and who came up to worship at this now desolate shrine, sadness, almost amounting to distress, fills my mind. I know that these poor heathens were partakers of my own sinful nature—and that the only 'Name under heaven whereby we may be saved,' was an unknown Name to them, and therefore I feel sad."

"But, Jessie, that was no fault of theirs. God is just and merciful,—will He punish them for that?"

"Justice and mercy," answered Jessie, "are two very different attributes. They can never be united, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. On all who do not seek His mercy there, justice must be exercised in punishment, for 'all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.'"

"Jessie, I did not think you were so uncharitable. What would my husband say if he heard you speak in this way?"

"The question you asked me, dear Mrs. Mordaunt, was one which has been much discussed by many wise and learned men. My own mind I can hardly call made up, and I had rather not speak decidedly—indeed I cannot. Only let me ask you, suppose one of the poor heathen we are speaking of, were admitted by death into heaven, would he be happy there? would the occupations, the inhabitants, the scenes of that bright world, be congenial to his tastes? I think it a very strong test, whether or not we are regenerate, to ask ourselves how we should feel were we suddenly removed to that holy place."

"I see what you think, Jessie," said Mrs. Mordaunt, "but I think it is very shocking."

"The way to settle a point," said Jessie, gently, "is not to ask whether it is likely or not, agreeable or not, but is it in the Word of God?"

"Well, Jessie, you know that Book better than I do; what does it say?"

"It says that, 'He who knew his Lord's will,

and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes, but that he that knew it *not*, and did it not, shall be beaten with few stripes.' *Few* stripes, you will observe, but not none; and the justice of this, and the reason of it, is explained in the 1st chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. There we find that they might have known the true God if they had chosen; 'because the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.' They ought to have known that the heavens and the earth could never have been made by gods fashioned by themselves, but yet they wilfully rejected the light of nature, and 'changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things, wherefore God also gave them up' to their own sinful inclinations. Thus the justice of God is vindicated: they gave *Him* up before He gave up them."

"That is very strong language, Jessie," said Mrs. Mordaunt; "but still, as you say, it is only a '*few* stripes.' They will not be punished as severely as others."

"No, my dear Mrs. Mordaunt," said Jessie, warmly; "assuredly not; that is a doctrine on which Scripture speaks positively and plainly, 'Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required.' Oh, let this be the lesson

taught us by these mouldering ruins; let them echo in our ears the Saviour's own language, 'Woe unto thee, Chorazin; woe unto thee, Bethsaida; for if the mighty works which have been done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, in sackcloth and ashes.' May He in his mercy grant, that at the last these bleaching fragments of mortality (and she took up, as she spoke, one of the human bones dug out from among the ruins) may not rise up to condemn us. Our eyes see, our ears hear, what many prophets and kings desired in vain to see and hear—our duty is to improve these opportunities. A Saviour is offered to us, who was never preached within these walls. He invites us, yes you, dear Mrs. Mordaunt, you, dear Ellen, and me, even me also, to come to His loving arms. He offers to pardon our sins, to sanctify us by His Spirit, and to bring us to glory. Shall we hesitate to flee to Him on account of speculative questions about those who went before us? Shall we cavil at the light which shines on us, because it did not shine on *them*? Oh, time is too short, eternity too long, too tremendous to admit of this. Below is an abyss, more fearful far than that sea beneath our feet; we know not how soon it may cover us, and that for ever. Shall we not flee *instantly* to the hope set before us—to the Rock of Ages? Shall we not all exclaim with David, 'Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. My flesh and my heart

faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever!"

Animated with her subject, Jessie had thus proceeded, and her friends both looked up at her as she quoted this beautiful passage. It was deeply touching to hear such language from one who could so truly apply it to herself. Mrs. Mordaunt's tears fell, and Ellen hid her face on Jessie's hand to conceal hers. But Jessie's eyes were dry—they perfectly shone, and a sweet serious smile was on her lips. It was no moment for talking, so they were all silent; Jessie's thoughts soaring far away into realms of boundless light and glory, Mrs. Mordaunt's filled with soft affection for her young friend, and with comparisons of her with herself; and Ellen's heart deeply responding to all that Jessie had said of Him whom she felt that she had chosen, "Or if I have never chosen Him before," said she to herself, "I do so now."

They were rejoined by their friends, and retraced their steps to the boat. They were none of them merry as they sailed back, amid the phosphorescent stars created by each stroke of the oars, or by the fairy fingers of the little ones held over the boat's side. One little sentence seemed to all inscribed on every rock, and tree, and hill, and on every ripple of that glassy sea—"It is the last!" These sad words cast a shade on every heart. Yet no one was unhappy—not even when they glanced at that fragile girl—for she looked so well that

evening, and her eyes so bright. Each was busied with his own thoughts, and they scarcely interchanged a word till the sound of voices, and the dropping of their little anchor, told them they had arrived at busy Spezzia.

CHAPTER XVII.

FRESH SCENES.

"Grow in grace."—2 PETER iii. 18.

THE journey was performed in the same manner as the former one; and again Ellen had the pleasure of Mr. Blackburn's society, and of her friend's. They started in good time, and enjoyed a lovely drive to the Magra, a broad torrent close to the Sardinian frontier. Standing in the ferry-boat that conveyed them across, they looked around on the neighbouring scenery. The country was dressed in rich green; vegetation beautified the hills around. On one high hill a small town stood out conspicuous, its spire glittering in the sun, and its bells pealing forth the mid-day chime.

"I have read," said Jessie, "that the spot from whence our Lord delivered 'the Sermon on the Mount' is supposed to be a hill, facing to another, on the summit of which is built the town of Saphet, a very ancient city. If so, we can well imagine how all present would at once perceive the beauty of His imagery; when, perhaps, pointing to the most conspicuous object, He said, 'Ye are the light of the world; a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.' We,

too, dear Ellen, may draw the same comparison from that little town before us—may it be an emblem of your future life, my dear child.”

As Jessie spoke, Ellen’s eyes involuntarily fell upon her father, who was standing at some little distance. “You have plenty of inducement, dear Ellen; but remember, it is *deeds*, more than *words*, that are to do it. ‘Let your light so shine before men, that they may *see your good works*, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.’”

“I have such a desire,” said Ellen, “to visit the Holy Land. I wonder if I shall ever accomplish it.”

“Now, that is just like Ellen,” said Mrs. Mordaunt, who had come up to them and overheard Ellen’s last words. “She has so many schemes and plans, her life will be a long one if it allows time for half of them.”

Ellen smiled — “Well, mamma, but when I go to Jerusalem, you shall go with me; we will visit Galilee, Smaria, the Mount of Olives, Siloam, —every thing.”

“I own I should like to see all those places,” said Mrs. Mordaunt. “I had rather travel in that land than any other. I think it would really make me a Christian.”

Ellen’s coming expostulation was stopped short by her father, who, turning round, said — Now, my dear, instead of starting on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, or Mecca, or any other shrine, let me request you to get out of the boat.”

"Poor mamma," said Ellen, as she stood with Jessie on the sandy bed of the river, waiting for Mr. Blackburn. "I wish she would not talk in that way. Sometimes I think she is going to be all we wish, and then she says something that undoes it all."

"Patience, Ellen," said Jessie, "you must not be in too great a hurry. I trust the time will come when you *will* see her all you wish."

"Now, my dear child," said Mr. Blackburn, "let me help you over this uneven road, and then we will re-enter the carriage."

The afternoon's drive was very beautiful. It led them over a chesnut-covered pass among the marble-quarried mountains of Carrara. Thence glancing at the picturesque city of Massa, they crossed the Tuscan boundary, and were borne along over a level plain to Pietra Santa, where they intended to pass the night.

They were none of them very tired that evening, and they sat cheerfully round the tea-table, in the long sitting-room.

"Well," said Mr. Mordaunt, "the invalids look very brisk, I think; rather less pale and weary than if they had been upon the pilgrimage my wife was proposing to-day. When do you intend setting out, Mary, and upon what errand—is it a crusade? or merely a few weeks' tour—run through to get up another book of 'Travels in the Holy Land?'"

"Now, Edward," said Mrs. Mordaunt, "what

a quiz you are. I shall not take *you* with me, and yet I shall never go without you; so I suppose I am not likely to go at all. Ellen may, for she is young and will be starting in life for herself one of these days. I should like it though, as I said this morning; and by visiting those holy places, I think I should become a much better Christian than I am now."

"No, my dear madam," answered Mr. Blackburn, "believe me, such an enterprise as that would only end in disappointment. I once thought as you do; and what is more, I tried it, and found out my mistake."

"What! Mr. Blackburn," exclaimed Ellen, "have you been to the Holy Land? Oh, Jessie, you never told me this before."

"It was long before Jessie was born," answered Mr. Blackburn. "I was myself but a boy at the time I went."

"Why, my dear sir," said Mr. Mordaunt, "you must have been all over the world; we hear of new travels every day. I declare I envy you."

"And, sir," continued Ellen, her eye kindling as she spoke, "have you seen the Sea of Galilee, and the Mount of Olives?"

"Yes, my dear young lady, I have. I have visited almost every spot of Scripture association in that land, with the very design of being converted thereby; and I can bear witness to its utter inability so to do."

"Well, you are a man of truth, Mr. Blackburn,"

said Mrs. Mordaunt; "therefore, I believe you. I think, also, that if *any* body could have found benefit from it, *you* would have done so. But it does appear to me, that I could not visit those places, of which I have read in my Bible, without being greatly moved."

"I did not say I was not moved, my dear Mrs. Mordaunt; on the contrary, I was touched even to tears. But it requires more than this to become a *Christian*."

"I own I cannot quite understand you, Mr. Blackburn," said Mrs. Mordaunt; "it seems to me that a person who could feel so warmly could not be any thing but a Christian; and, as to any body visiting those scenes with *indifference*, I do not believe it possible."

"And yet there have been such," answered Mr. Blackburn. "Men who left their own country infidels, and scoffers at the Word of God, have travelled in the land of Israel, have witnessed the literal fulfilment of the predictions of that Word—nay, have *recorded* the desolation of Judea, the baldness of Gaza, the spreading of nets upon the once proud Tyre, and have returned to their own lands infidels and scoffers still—disputers of the existence of a God, and mockers of His Holy Word."

Mrs. Mordaunt looked both shocked and surprised. "I never heard of such a thing, Mr. Blackburn. I never knew that any body had ever doubted the truth of the Bible."

"It is but too true," answered Mr. Blackburn.
"Mr. Mordaunt, what say you?"

"I cannot deny," said Mr. Mordaunt, "that such men have and do exist; though, I think, no man in full possession of his senses, and allowing his reason proper exercise, can really hold such an opinion. At the same time, I agree with my wife, that were I to visit Palestine, I could not resist the force of sacred associations, early implanted; and I think the feelings so called out could not be otherwise than beneficial. I should much like to know the results in your case, my dear sir."

"I was but a child," answered Mr. Blackburn, "when serious thoughts first came into my mind. My pious mother instructed me very carefully, so that at a very early age I was well acquainted with my Bible, but I was as full of myself and of my evil ways as most other boys are, only far more responsible than the generality. When I was about ten years old, I began gradually to see what I really was, and I did not for an instant doubt the necessity of renewal of heart, as a preparation for the ministry (for which I was intended) or still more for heaven itself. For some time I took it as a matter of certainty that I should be converted some day or other, but as years rolled on, and the looked for event did not take place, I became very uneasy. The chief evil seemed to be that I could not make myself *feel*. The truths I had been taught were so familiar, that they influenced neither

my fears nor my affections. The greatest relief was when some eloquent sermon or thrilling hymn excited in me something like a glow; this I fancied was spiritual warmth. This, however, happened more and more rarely, and I became very uneasy—I trembled not at the realities of religion themselves, but *because* I was not alarmed by them, if you can understand the distinction.”

A quick answering glance from Ellen showed that she, at least, understood it well.

“One day returning from a Jewish Missionary meeting, it struck me that the thing most likely to arouse me would be a journey to the East in company with some Christian friends, to see with my own eyes sacred places. This idea having entered my mind, I began to look upon it as a positive necessity, without which I could not be saved. Had any one then charged me with Popish superstition, my indignation would have been extreme; yet, in fact, I was guilty of it by making a Saviour of a pilgrimage to the Land of Israel, and displacing Him to whom alone the glory of salvation belongs. In this state of mind, one day I heard my uncle announce that he and his sons were going to undertake the very journey I so desired. I dared not ask to be one of the party, but my heart beat while they were talking of it, and I became so excited that I was obliged to leave the room. Judge then what I felt when the next day my father called me to his study, and said, that my uncle had proposed my joining him, as it might



prove beneficial to my health, and that he and my mother had consented to it if I would like to go. Even now I can plainly remember the sensations of that moment. I had prayed with tears that I might go with my uncle, who was a devoted Christian, but I had not expected it. I burst into tears of joy; my father was surprised, but attributing my agitation to nervousness was still more willing to send me. Well, my friends, I will not detain you. I went in Christian society, with a pious and learned man; with two young cousins full of simplicity, in whose hearts love for their Lord had already 'made all things new.' The excitement with which I traversed that land I cannot describe. I rode over its rocky paths on my camel's back, in true Eastern style; when in sight of the Holy City, I heard the ancient shout of the guides; and I joined the soft young voices of my cousins in the hymn of prayer for the restoration of Israel. The pain my uncle felt on hearing the superstitious legends, and witnessing the abominations of a false religion, I did not enter into. It was the New-Testament Jerusalem still to me. I trod the yet shady precincts of the Mount of Olives; I stood and pondered on the spot whence our Lord 'beheld the city and wept over it;' I knelt, till even my forehead touched the old ruined wall, the only remnant of the ancient temple, where the poor Jews are, on certain days, allowed to come and pray; and, Miss Mordaunt, I have sailed over the Sea of Galilee, and pictured to

myself the form of the Lord Jesus treading on those swelling waves; I have sat upon the mouldering fragments of Capernaum, once exalted to heaven, now sunk to hell; I have dipped in the buoyant waters of the Dead Sea. I wept as I gazed on these sacred scenes—I wept, and what then? Was I converted? Was my heart changed from ‘one of stone to one of flesh?’ For a short time, a certain freshness to which I had before been a stranger, rendered the sacred page more interesting. I could now picture to myself the places of which I read, as they really were; and a warm gush of tears, when on a sunny day I realised anew the still and fragrant beauty of the Sea of Galilee, deluded me into the hope that love was kindled towards Him who frequented those pebbly shores. But soon this faded away, and I was forced to acknowledge, though how unwillingly, I cannot adequately express, that the imagination, not the heart, had been influenced.”

“And then?” asked Ellen.

“And then,” said Mr. Blackburn, smiling kindly at her, “had I received my deserts, I should have been left to my own dark fears and despairing thoughts. But He who ‘leads the blind by a way that they know not,’ dealt graciously with my soul. I suffered much for some time, but at length, in His own good time, the true light shone, and then I experienced the truth of the word, ‘Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven, that is to bring down Christ from

above, or who shall descend into the deep, that is to bring up Christ again from the dead. The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart.' After this I travelled once more, but no longer in search of a distant Saviour. I had found 'the Pearl of great price,' and I went forth to commend Him to others. He had 'opened my lips,' and my mouth burned to 'speak His praise.' Forgive me, my dear madam," continued Mr. Blackburn, turning to Mrs. Mordaunt, "for speaking so much of myself. I had not intended this, but I have been led on. I fear I have wearied you."

"No, Mr. Blackburn," said Mrs. Mordaunt; "I have listened with great interest."

And Mr. Mordaunt, rising and ringing the bell, added—"If the world is to be made Christian, it will be by sincere and honest men like you, who tell the truth without cant."

Ellen's joy was great when she found that she and little Annie were to share Jessie's room.

"My dearest Ellen," said Jessie, when they were together, "we may never be so closely quartered again. Words will not express all I would say in this precious opportunity. Come here, my child, and give me a long kiss. There"—and she pressed her to her heart. "Dear Ellen, how good the Lord has been in giving you to me."

Jessie," said Ellen, "it is I, not you, who should say that."

"Nay, I may well be thankful," said Jessie; "for I often think how lonely we should have been,

had we not had such kind friends. My father! how great an advantage Mr. Mordaunt's society has been to him; and to *me*, my Ellen, I cannot tell the blessing you have been."

"Oh, Jessie," said Ellen, looking up, with loving eyes, into her friend's face, "just think what cause for thankfulness *I* have. How unhappy I was at leaving England. I thought I was leaving all good behind me. And then I found more than ever I expected. How can any one doubt there is such a thing as Providence!"

"Ah, Ellen, we will not attempt to solve that difficulty. Enough that we know it to be true. *We* believe it in our inmost hearts. Come, let us read together;" and she opened her Bible, and drew near to the table. "My chapter is the sixth of John; shall we read it together, Ellen?"

"Oh, yes."

They read it verse by verse, remarking on it as they proceeded. Ellen read the 37th verse.

"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

"I think," she said, "that verse is the one I love best in all the Bible, Jessie."

"It has comforted Christians in all ages," she replied. "It has often struck me how simply this verse deals with the most mysterious, and the most *plain*, of the doctrines of Scripture. "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me." Here is election clearly and positively laid down.

But lest this should alarm the doubting, trembling soul, it is added; 'him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.' It is as if He had said, 'I will ask no questions; I will not enquire how he came, what motives brought him, whether fear, or sorrow, or sin, drove him to Me; suffice it that he come, 'I will in no wise cast him out.'"

"Ah, Jessie! that just suits me. Sometimes I wonder if He will receive me—so cold and unfeeling—but then I say, 'If I tarry till I am better I shall never come at all,' and so I dare not keep away."

"You do quite right, dear Ellen. This blessed text is your warrant."

They read the next two verses.

"Here," said Jessie, "is election again. How plainly! and how it secures the safety of every chosen one."

"But, Jessie," said Ellen, "do you know I sometimes feel afraid of this doctrine. I see it in Scripture, and I believe it; but still it frightens me. Look here, it is God's 'will' indeed to *save*, but only those He has given to the Son. Suppose, only just suppose, I were *not*."

"Read the next verse, dear Ellen, and bid your fears depart."

Ellen read, "And *this* is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one that seeth the Son and believeth in Him may have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

"Is not this," said Jessie, "like a revelation

to man of the secret counsels of God? Do you not see how it explains the former verse? It seems as if the Lord foresaw your fears, dear Ellen, and added this to dissipate them. You doubt if you are one of the '*given*' ones. Then see, do you believe on the Son? if so, *you are*; for He declares of such that they 'have everlasting life.' "

"How comforting this is. Yes, I do believe—I think I do."

They read on to the end.

"Ah, Jessie," said, Ellen, "I fear lest I should be like these faithless disciples."

"Let that fear, dear Ellen, keep you earnest in prayer—'watch and pray,' and yet, while you fear, *fear not*, for 'this is the will of God,' remember, 'that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth in Him, may have everlasting life.' You said just now you believed; then be of good courage; I am sure the language of your heart is the same as Peter's."

"Yes, yes, dear Jessie, I do say it, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.' " Jessie added, with deep solemnity, "'And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.' Ellen, my dear friend, let us, once at least before we part, kneel together and seek his favour."

"Before we part, Jessie!"

"Yes, Ellen, before we part. I know—I feel the time is short," answered Jessie, averting further reply by drawing Ellen to her side. They

knelt, and Ellen's heart went up with Jessie's voice in earnest prayer. From Jessie's long and intimate knowledge of Ellen's heart, she was able greatly to suit her language to her friend's wants and wishes; nor did she omit a fervent petition for those so dear to Ellen, her father, mother, and the little ones, concluding, in the language of the beautiful Scottish hymn—

" Oh spread thy covering wings around,
Till all our wanderings cease;
And in our Father's loved abode
Our souls arrive in peace."

Rising from their knees they embraced one another, and in a few minutes were in their beds. Ellen felt greatly solemnised, yet very happy. She had experienced the pleasure of true union of spirit with a dear friend, sealed by mutual prayer. Her sleep was sweet that night, and her waking cheerful and happy. Mr. and Mrs. Mordaunt had been conscious for some time of a great improvement in her. Her temper was, indeed, naturally good; but she much less frequently gave way to a kind of depressed and mortified air, which her father used to say made her look as if she thought herself a martyr. She was much steadier, and more consistent in her dealings with the children, and her usual manner was far more cheerful and happy. The fact was, when first she began to learn true religion, she had been tormented with a fear of being light and silly in her manners and conversation, the result of which was a constrained and

often silent behaviour, of which her parents complained much. She was now learning, perhaps from a more settled and peaceful frame of mind, to be cheerful and lively, and more like other girls of her age. It cost her something at times to be so; when the *inner life* was less vigorous, and the secret history of her soul was darkened by besetting sins and infirmities. Nor did she always succeed, but she was daily improving, and her parents saw it. They did not, however, cease from the endeavour to, as they called it, keep her from extremes, by strictness in their treatment, and often a sharp reproach; so that her life was by no means a bed of roses; but the intenseness of her love for her father, and the tenderness of that for her mother, made hers on the whole a happy home, or rather made her happy in it. Jessie and her father watched her with much affectionate interest. They rejoiced in her increasing love for her Bible and spiritual things, so artlessly shown as to be unmistakeable, and the accompanying carefulness and correctness of her conduct were very satisfactory. They were glad to think she would have Christian society on her return home, in Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell, and they encouraged the hope that Mr. and Mrs. Mordaunt were less opposed, than formerly, to evangelical religion; and so, indeed, they were.

They pursued their journey the next morning. At Pisa they only halted to dine and rest, leaving, till some future occasion, the pleasure of visiting its leaning tower and cathedral. They arrived

before night, at bustling, commercial Leghorn, and the contrast with their beautiful bay of Spezzia was so greatly disadvantageous to the former, that, had it not been for Mrs. Mordaunt, they would hardly have persuaded themselves to remain.

They took an apartment outside the walls by the sea-side, and although the coast was flat, and in comparison with Spezzia very uninteresting, there was that in the wide expanse of sky and sea that failed not to please. They looked forward now with eagerness to the arrival of James Blackburn, though they could not calculate the exact day.

One afternoon the whole party took a drive on the public promenade, which leads along the coast for some considerable distance. Mr. Mordaunt, Ellen, and the children, got out for a walk upon the low flat rocks that form one part of the beach, while the rest drove on and returned. They watched the sun, as in cloudless glory it sank down to the horizon, lower and lower, till it quite disappeared.

"It is gone to light the people under our feet," said Robert, as the last speck vanished.

"Did you see the sun set to-night?" asked Ellen of Jessie, as seated in the carriage, or rather *packed* in, they drove back.

"Oh, yes," answered Jessie, "we saw it in perfection as we drove along. Oh! Ellen,

" few more rolling suns at most,
Shall land me on fair Canaan's coast."

This was said in a low voice, so that Ellen only heard it, but it furnished matter for thought during the rest of the way. The evening star and the shades of night had come, before they entered. Ellen passed through the drawing-room to go to her own little room. It was nearly dark, for the rays of the young moon did not penetrate much further than the window-frame. Ellen stopped for a moment. "Sweet Italian evenings," she softly said, "shall I ever forget you?"

As she spoke, a gentleman appeared from the window, where he had been standing concealed by the curtain. Ellen started.

"Do not let me alarm you," said a very pleasant voice. But Ellen was a little alarmed, and moreover disconcerted at being overheard.

"Are you waiting for my father, sir?" she said; "he will be here directly."

"I arrived while you were out," said the stranger, "and asked the servant not to mention me, lest it should startle my father and sister. My name is Blackburn."

"What!" exclaimed Ellen, with delight. "Oh, you are Jessie's brother. I will run and tell her."

"Perhaps you had better not," said he, smiling at Ellen's eagerness. "You are Miss Mordaunt, I suppose. Jessie has often written me of your kindness to her. How is my dear sister?"

"I think she is better," answered Ellen; "and when she sees you she will be better still. I will not startle her; let me go and call her."

Just then the servant brought in the lamp, and was immediately followed by Jessie.

"My brother!" she exclaimed, and they were instantly in each other's arms. The joy of that evening can be better imagined than described.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A BIRTH ON EARTH, AND A BIRTH IN HEAVEN.

"She is not dead, but sleepeth."—LUKE viii. 52.

ONE day, towards the middle of August, a fair little boy was born. Ellen and Jessie were sitting with the children, endeavouring to amuse them quietly, when Mr. Mordaunt came in, and gave the welcome intelligence; and it would be difficult to say who received it with most delight. The child, however, proved delicate, and Mrs. Mordaunt long continued in a very weak and nervous state. For these reasons, a private baptism was decided on; but not for these reasons only. The parents wished Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell to be the sponsors for the little stranger; but on their writing to make the request, an answer was returned, expressing much gratification at the friendship evinced by such a proposition, but adding, that from conscientious scruples, consent could not be given, to receive so responsible an office by *proxy*.

— Ellen's heart beat as her father read this letter aloud. She had been delighted when the selection of sponsors had been made: first, because she

hoped it might evince her parents' desire that their child should be under Christian influence; and then, because it would constitute such a tie between the families. Now, she not only regretted the refusal itself, but she was filled with anxiety lest her parents should be annoyed at a scrupulousness into which they could not enter, but for which she, in her heart, esteemed the Maxwells the more. As usual, she had to bear an uncomfortable suspense for several days, arguing alternately good or evil, as her father looked grave or smiling. At length, however, hearing the prolific subject of the choice of a *name* being discussed, she ventured to ask who were to be the sponsors.

"That remains to be seen," answered her father. "Your friend, Maxwell, does not like doing the thing by proxy; whether he is right or wrong is no affair of mine. I respect a conscientious feeling in any man, and so will not for an instant urge it. However, I have no choice *here* of any one else; and, besides, there is no one I should like so well as the son of my old friend; therefore, Miss Mordaunt," he continued, looking smiling at her, "my intention is, that baby shall be baptized at home, which requires no sponsors at all; and I shall write to Maxwell again, and propose to him and his wife to stand when we return to England. Does that suit your fastidious wisdom?"

Ellen answered by giving him a most energetic kiss.

"Well," said Mrs. Mordaunt, "but when shall the baptism itself take place?"

"We must fix the name first, my dear," replied he.

"Just wait till to-morrow, Edward," said his wife, "to please me."

"Certainly, my dear; it was at your wish I was settling it now."

That evening, when the rest of the party were gone for their walk on the rocks, and Jessie was sitting by the side of Mrs. Mordaunt's sofa, the latter said—

"Jessie, I want to say something to you; will you promise to give me a straightforward answer?"

"Certainly," was Jessie's answer.

"My husband has been talking a great deal to-day about baby's name; he proposes his own father's name, or Joseph, which is Mr. Maxwell's. I like the last myself; but I have a wish, a very great wish, Jessie—it will not vex you if I say it."

"No, dear Mrs. Mordaunt; say it without hesitation."

"Jessie, this visit to the continent has been a very eventful one; it has given us dear friends we shall never cease to love. I do not say much of what I feel, but *I do feel, notwithstanding*; and I know that if I live for a hundred years, I shall never think of Italy without more love and affection than I can tell you. You have done me good, Jessie, your dear father has done me good; and

you have done Ellen good, too. I do not say much about it, because she is young, and too easily led into extremes; but she ~~is~~ improved; in the best of all ways she is improved, and you have done it."

"My dear Mrs. Mordaunt, not *I*; it is the Lord's own work."

"Yes, yes, I know what you mean; but still you were the instrument. Well, Jessie, I long since intended, if I had a girl, to call her Jessie. I never dared to hope for another *boy*—that was too much mercy to expect; but you see that blessing has been given me. Jessie, I have never forgotten a beautiful account you once gave me of your brother—your little angel brother; but I fear your father might not like me to take his name. Could I, might I, call him Martyn?"

"My dear friend," said Jessie, unable to restrain her tears, "surely you may if you wish it. I am certain my dear father would feel as I do, much gratified at the affection evidenced by such a thought."

"Well, Jessie, if you think he will not be vexed, then I will call my boy Martyn; and Jessie, believe me, I have no greater wish than that he should be just such a one as your brother."

"God grant it, my dear friend," said Jessie, with a sigh.

That evening Mrs. Mordaunt told her husband that she wished the boy to be called Martyn Joseph.

"Martyn! my dear," repeated he; "what is your fancy for such a curious name? I never heard of any friend of yours so called."

Ellen's colour mounted high, and she turned to the window to conceal her feelings.

Mrs. Mordaunt explained the reason for her choice.

"Well, my dear, if you think our friend will not be more pained than complimented, you shall have your way."

But, as may be believed, Mr. Blackburn was not pained, though he was surprised.

"Who can tell," said he, with much feeling, "but that this may be a token for good. Ah, Martyn! my blessed child, 'being dead, thou speakest yet.'"

In a few days the baptism took place, in the presence of the assembled family, and fervent were the prayers raised on his behalf.

In September, their house being exposed to the sea breezes, and the autumn setting in early, the winds were very trying to Jessie, though the rest of the party hailed it as most delightful weather. James Blackburn saw that a change was likely to benefit his sister, and he proposed her removal to Pisa until Mr. and Mrs. Mordaunt should join them, when they might decide on their winter plans. This proposal was approved of by the judgment of all, but by the feelings of none. However, the former triumphed over the latter, it being argued that in so

close a vicinity they might meet whenever disposed.

Accordingly, one bright Monday morning a carriage stood at the door, ready to convey Mr. Blackburn, his son and daughter, and little Robert, for whom they had petitioned, to Pisa. The days for continental railroads had not yet come, and they had the prospect of full two hours' driving over a flat and very uninteresting country.

"Jessie kissed Annie and Willie tenderly, and then went to seek Mrs. Mordaunt, who was on the sofa in her own room, old Dinah standing near with baby Martyn in her arms.

"Good-bye, my dear friend," said Jessie, with much feeling. "God Himself bless you."

"We shall soon meet again, my dear Jessie," said Mrs. Mordaunt, trying to rally her own spirits, and check the forebodings that would arise; "take care of yourself till then."

"God above can tell when we shall meet," answered Jessie; "if not on earth, oh, may we meet at *His* right hand. God in Christ be with and bless you, and bring every one of this dear family to glory. I cannot thank you for all your love and kindness, Mrs. Mordaunt; the attempt would be vain; farewell." Jessie's voice faltered, and her bright eyes were dimmed with tears as she embraced her. Turning to the baby, she took him in her arms: "Martyn," she said, "my sweet baby; may my brother's God and Saviour be

thine." Her hand trembled as she replaced him in Dinah's arms, and then she hurried from the room.

She encountered Ellen in the passage.

"Ellen, my beloved, farewell."

"Oh, Jessie, when shall I see you? Send for me if you are ill."

"Would they let you come, Ellen?"

"Yes; I think so, if *you* asked it. Send at all events."

"I will; I promise; once more, farewell, and the Lord be with thee."

It was not from what is generally called a presentiment, that Jessie was so much moved at this parting. She felt more than she could well express how steadily she was progressing towards her long home. She feared it not, but the act of bidding farewell to those she so dearly loved distressed her affectionate heart; for she knew it was possible, perhaps *probable*, they might not meet again on earth. They drove from the door, and Mr. Mordaunt with them. He returned the next day, having seen them comfortably settled in an inn on the quay by the river.

A fortnight passed away after the departure of the Blackburns, and still Mrs. Mordaunt continued very unwell. One morning Mr. Mordaunt came into his wife's room, looking very grave. He was evidently trying to conceal it, but did not succeed.

"I am going over to Pisa;" he said. "Ellen, I will take you with me."



Ellen started with joy.

"Go at once," said her father, "and put up your night-things, for perhaps we may stay the night." Ellen obeyed directly.

"The fact is," said Mr. Mordaunt, as she closed the door; "Jessie is not very well."

"Oh, Edward!" exclaimed Mrs. Mordaunt; "is she really ill! How I should like to go! Do you think I could?"

"Most certainly not, my dear wife. Why, you were so faint and sick this morning, you did not know how to get up. I could not think of it. Do not be alarmed. She has, no doubt, exerted herself too much, sight-seeing, and feels worse than she really is. She naturally wishes to see Ellen, and I do not like to refuse this, though it may only be fancy."

Mrs. Mordaunt was relieved in hearing him speak so cheerfully. She was indeed very weak that day, and after this additional excitement, she became so nervous and ill, that he promised her he would return that night.

Ellen and her father were soon in the carriage. He said nothing, so she did not like to ask, especially as he was apparently very busy reading the newspaper; but she felt very uneasy. The sun was shining brightly, and the day was very warm; the sea, as they drove towards the town, looked white and silvery, and the lighthouse stood out conspicuous against the light blue sky. They drove through the bustling noisy town, and out at the oppo-

site gate. When they had gone about half-way, Mr. Mordaunt put down his newspaper and said—

“Ellen, I did not wish to alarm your mother; but it is only right to prepare you. Jessie is not well. I heard from her brother this morning.”

“Oh, papa;” exclaimed Ellen, “I guessed as much from your face. Oh, tell me, is she very ill?”

“I cannot deceive you, my dear,” said he, very kindly; “she is very ill; but still, do not despair, it is not hopeless.”

Ellen burst into tears.

“Thank you for bringing me to see her, my own dear papa;” was all she could say, and she laid her head on his shoulder. He pressed her to him.

“That terrible complaint,” he said, “sooner or later must come to this; but certainly, I did not anticipate it so soon.”

“How did it happen?” asked Ellen.

“She has been seized with violent hemorrhage from the lungs;” answered her father, “which at her stage of the complaint is peculiarly dangerous. I rejoice, however, to hear Miss Clinton is with her.”

“Miss Clinton! how glad I am. Oh, papa, it is Providence who has done this.”

Well, I confess it does look like it,” said he; “she happened to write that she was coming from the Baths of Lucca to see them, the very day before Jessie was taken ill.”

That hot dusty road seemed never coming to an end. At length they entered the gate of venerable old Pisa. They drove down one side of the river, over a bridge, and up the other. It was at a season when few persons walk out in the heat of the day, and the white pavement sent up a glaring light; but Ellen heeded nothing, she scarcely saw anything till the carriage stopped at the hotel door. Her father handed her out, and they proceeded up stairs.

They entered the sitting-room, and in a minute, James Blackburn came to them. He looked pale and anxious. Shaking hands with them both, he said,

"My father will be most grateful for your kindness in coming so soon, and so am I. You are true friends I know. I will go to her, and send Miss Clinton."

"How is your sister?" asked Mr. Mordaunt.

"We hope a little better," said James with a voice that spoke his own sad fears.

"Come, come, cheer up," said Mr. Mordaunt, "if she is better, that is excellent."

James shook his head, and went out of the room. In a few minutes kind Miss Clinton came in. Her voice was as kind as ever; but lowered, to suit the vicinity of sickness and sorrow. She held out her hand to Mr. Mordaunt, and kissed Ellen most warmly.

"Well, my dear," she said, "I am glad to see you again, though I wish it had been on some other occasion."

"How is *she*?" asked Ellen, in a deep anxious voice.

"Ah! then, she is only very poorly. You will see a great change, my dear child; but the sweet creature is so cheerful and calm, it is a blessed privilege to be with her. Ah, sir, there are none but Christians know how to die."

"I hope," said Mr. Mordaunt, "she will rally yet. We are not such unselfish beings, my dear Miss Clinton, at least I am not, as to let the angels have her without sincere reluctance; let us hope to keep her still."

"The Lord knows," said Miss Clinton, with a sigh. "Come, my dear child, your friend will like to see you. She is just awake."

"And Mr. Blackburn?" asked Mr. Mordaunt.

"We persuaded him to go for a little walk with your Robert, while Jessie slept. He had been up all night, and needed refreshment; but he would not lie down."

Ellen followed Miss Clinton across a passage, and into a room overlooking the quay. There, supported by pillows, lay Jessie; but how changed. Her cheeks had sunk, and were deathly pale, save where the bright spot glowed in unnatural brilliancy. A smile of pleasure passed over her face as she saw Ellen. She did not lift her head, but pressed her hand tenderly.

"Dearest Ellen!" was all she could say, and that in a very faint voice. Ellen stooped over her, and kissed her brow, but spoke not.

"I have been very ill," at length Jessie said, "dearest Ellen, it has come at last."

"You are happy, Jessie?" asked Ellen in almost a whisper.

"Happy!" repeated Jessie. "Christ is with me; 'a peace that passeth all understanding' is mine. Who brought you, Ellen?" she added after a pause.

"My father."

"I should so like to see him; would he come in?"

"I will fetch him," said James, who was standing on the other side of the bed. In a minute he returned with Mr. Mordaunt. Jessie held out her hand to him. "You are very good to come, and to bring my dear Ellen. How is dear Mrs. Mordaunt?"

"She is not well," answered he. "I left her very weak and faint, but it is of no consequence, I hope; only I would not let her come, which she wished much to do. But you must not talk Miss Blackburn, indeed you must not; if Ellen makes you talk, I must take her away again."

Jessie smiled faintly. She looked so very ill, that James raised her pillow, and supported her head. She coughed a little and then closed her eyes. Soon she opened them again, and looked round upon them all.

"I am going through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, Mr. Mordaunt, but I fear no evil."

"Ah, my dear Miss Blackburn, if we were all such good Christians as you, we should none of us have cause to fear."

"No, no;" said Jessie, earnestly, a slight contraction gathering on her brow; "*that* is no comfort to me. *He* is with me, *therefore* I do not fear. His rod and staff, they comfort me."

Once more she closed her eyes: and Mr. Mor-daunt took that opportunity to leave the room. Ellen followed him to see what he wished her to do. Never had she seen her father so moved. His countenance was pale and rigid with the effort to restrain his feelings. Her own sorrow seemed forgotten in anxiety and love for him. She went up to him, and laid her hand on his shoulder. He answered her long earnest gaze with one of those looks of affection which struck more closely to Ellen's heart than any thing else on earth; and clearing his throat, after more than one ineffectual effort, he said—

"Ellen, I shall be obliged to leave to-night, to keep my promise to your mother. I regret it, but it cannot be helped—would you like to stay?"

"Would I, my dearest papa! oh, how kind you are to me!"

"Well, you may stay if you like, and I shall come back as early as possible in the morning."

Just at this moment Mr. Blackburn entered with little Robert. On seeing his father and sister, the child went slowly up to kiss them, but spoke not a word; his large eyes looked gently round, and not a vestige of a smile lit up his usually animated face. It would be vain to describe all that took place on that sad day. By Jessie it

was passed in stillness and peace, and Ellen was much with her.

"Mr. Mordaunt busied himself in making little arrangements for their comfort, and procuring every little delicacy that he thought might refresh the invalid. He made her cooling drinks with his own hands, and contrived a couch for Mr. Blackburn at night, in a little room close to hers; in fact, he exercised all his natural ingenuity, rendered acute by his present warm feelings, in administering to the ease and comfort of his friends. How much they felt and appreciated it need not be said. In the afternoon Jessie revived a good deal, and sending for her father, remained alone with him for a considerable time, as if to make use of her present strength in communicating her last wishes to him.

As the lovely tints of evening coloured the sky, and cast their hues on the shallow waters of the river, Mr. Mordaunt felt that he must go. Taking an opportunity when Mr. Blackburn left Jessie's room, he told him how he was situated.

"It gives me great pain to have to leave you," he said, "but I do not like to break my word, and I do not think I could be of any further use to you. I will be with you as early as possible in the morning, meanwhile my heartfelt wishes and prayers are with you."

"I am fully aware of that," answered Mr. Blackburn, clasping his friend's hand; "go by all means, my dear friend; the comfort you have been to me this day I cannot express. God bless you;

give my Christian love to your dear wife. And your child, Ellen, do you wish to take her?"

"Not if you wish to keep her."

"I shall esteem it a favour if you will let her remain, it is such a comfort to my child. But not even for this Mr. Mordaunt do I wish you to run any risk—if you think"—

"Nothing of the kind," said Mr. Mordaunt, "I have no fears for such a short period. She shall stay to-night. Robert I will take with me, he is only in your way."

Mr. Blackburn did not urge Robert's stay, for the child had been so silent and oppressed all day with the sad scenes around him, that he was rather relieved at the proposal; being, uneasy lest strong feeling should injure his health, and leave too great an impression on his young mind.

A message now came from Jessie that she should like to see Mr. Mordaunt before he went; he immediately obeyed, and, with little Robert, stood beside the bed. Jessie looked revived since the morning. She said to Mr. Mordaunt in a still faint voice—

"I wished to see you again, to thank you for all your kindness, and to ask you"—

"I shall see you again in the morning," said he cheerfully, "I would not have left you now were I not obliged."

"I may not be able to speak to you in the morning as well as now. I want to say a few things—three things I *must* say, Mr. Mordaunt."

He drew nearer. "Tell me, dear Miss Blackburn; I will attend to all your wishes."

"First," said Jessie, "I want to ask you when I am gone to be still a friend to my dear father."

"Jessie, my child," burst from Mr. Blackburn, with a groan of anguish.

"Ah, my dear father, do not grieve so for me; will you do this, Mr. Mordaunt? James, my dear brother, is with him, but he will need the care of all his friends."

"Miss Blackburn," said Mr. Mordaunt, solemnly; "I promise you that I will never cease to do every thing in my power to comfort and assist your father. I will consider it as a sacred charge."

"Thank you, and God bless you. Now for the next thing; it is Mrs. Mordaunt, give her my love, my blessing and farewell; tell her, I die in peace; with no hope in myself, but with a confident, a joyful hope in my Saviour. Tell her this is my dying testimony, that we are lost helpless sinners in ourselves, but that Christ is 'mighty to save.' "

For a moment she seemed exhausted; but again rallying, she proceeded—

"And lastly, I would say a word to *you*, Mr. Mordaunt. Oh, how much—words fail me."

"Do not fatigue yourself, Miss Blackburn," said he. "I can imagine all you would say."

"No! let me say it," said Jessie, raising her head with unexpected energy. "Mr. Mordaunt, I entreat, I implore you, to meet me in heaven; you have an immortal soul! oh, rest not till it is saved.

There is but *one* way—it is to come to Christ as a lost and wretched sinner, and to seek salvation from Him. I have done so, and see, is He not faithful? is not the sting of death removed? He is *the truth*. He cannot lie: and He has said, ‘He that believeth in Me shall never perish.’”

She was silent, but her blue eyes were fixed on him, and her hand was laid on his. He pressed it. “Thank you,” he said at last, “I will remember your words.”

Her eyes now fell on Robert, who gazing intently at her, stood close by Miss Clinton’s side, and her kind arm was over his shoulder, pressing him towards her. Jessie laid her white hands on his head.

“Robert, my child,” she said, “you will not forget me?”

“Never, Jessie.”

“And will you mind and come to me in heaven? I am going to Jesus, Robert; will you every day ask Him to be your Saviour, and to give you his good Spirit?”

“I will, Jessie.”

“And tell Annie and Willie to do the same. Tell them I thought of them. Will you love my father, Robert, and be good to him?”

“Yes, yes, Jessie,” answered he, turning his eyes first on Mr. Blackburn and then back to Jessie.

“God bless you, my child,” she said, and then leant her head back, and closed her eyes.

Presently, she started, and looked round her. She breathed with great difficulty, and the colour left her face.

"My child, my Jessie," said Mr. Blackburn, anxiously; what is this?"

Miss Clinton took her hand and wetted her lips. "She wants air," said she, quietly.

Mr. Mordaunt went to the window and threw it open. From the houses opposite were reflected the bright rays of the setting sun, and the sky was coloured with a soft glow. The evening air came freshly in, and revived the fainting girl.

"Do not let us detain you, Mr. Mordaunt," said James Blackburn, who was holding the cup for Miss Clinton.

"No," said Mr. Mordaunt, "I shall not go yet; an hour more or less will make no difference."

Presently Jessie looked round on them all. "All here!" she softly murmured.

"Yes, dear sister," said James — "All your friends are with you; and He is with you 'Who sticketh closer than a brother.'"

Jessie smiled sweetly.

"Are you happy my child," said her father, "is Jesus still precious to your soul?"

She murmured, "His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me."

"What is your hope, my child?"

"Jesus," she replied, "and Jesus only."

Ellen was standing near James; she longed to hold the cup for Jessie, but did not like to ask;

he understood that longing look, and put it in her hand. At the slight movement made, Jessie unclosed her eyes. "Ellen, my beloved friend, farewell." Ellen leant forward and kissed her brow.

Jessie whispered, "Hold fast, Ellen, to the end. *He is faithful.*" She looked towards the window; Ah, how lovely! but my sun shall no more go down. Sing me a hymn," she whispered.

"Which?" asked James, bending over her that he might catch the words; again she whispered—

"How bright those glorious spirits shine."

Glancing to Miss Clinton to join him, he commenced that beautiful hymn. More than once their voices faltered, but they sang it; and Jessie followed the words with the motion of her lips. When they concluded, she looked up quietly—

"Father, give up your child into Jesus' hands." A look of intense anguish passed over Mr. Blackburn's brow, but he mastered it, and in broken accents besought the Lord to comfort her, and draw near to her soul; but as he marked the death-like expression of her face, he could not proceed. James took up his words, and commended her departing soul into the hands of her Saviour. Once more she looked up—

"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" she softly murmured; a smile of ineffable sweetness came over her face; and then she seemed to sleep. No one spoke; till at length the sounds of her breath-

ing no longer broke the stillness. Miss Clinton put her hand upon her brow, and started.

"Ah, the blessed saint," she exclaimed. All instantly glanced at Jessie, and Mr. Mordaunt drew back still further the curtain at the foot of the bed. That glance sufficed to tell that life was gone. James clasped his hands together. "She beholds His face in righteousness," said he, "and is satisfied." Every eye was anxiously turned on Mr. Blackburn; but he was calm.

"I thank thee, O Lord," said he, raising his eyes to heaven. "Thou gavest, and thou hast taken away, blessed be thy holy name;" then pressing his lips to his child's, he burst into tears. Mr. Mordaunt was relieved to see him weep, and with James, led him from the room.

The evening had deepened into night, and still Mr. Mordaunt was there; the carriage which had been already once put off, was waiting at the door, and Mr. Blackburn came to him and said—"My friend, go home to your wife. I shall not need you. *I* must be alone with God to-night. Leave your child if you will—she will be a friend for Miss Clinton; but go yourself, and return here to-morrow."

Mr. Mordaunt was deeply impressed with this collectedness.

"Mr. Blackburn," he said, "you astonish me; there must be a something in your religion different from all *I* have ever yet dreamed of."

With a smile of pleasure Mr. Blackburn took

his hand, and said, "Thank God for *this*—my child has not died in vain."

Much moved, Mr. Mordaunt turned to Ellen, and kissed her, desiring her to assist Miss Clinton as much as possible. Ellen spoke not, she was stupified with all she had witnessed. He looked at her—

"Do you mind remaining, Ellen? Would you rather go with me? You shall if you please."

"Oh no, papa, I would rather stay."

"Take care of yourself, my child," he said, half reproaching himself for having allowed her to remain. "Where is Robert?"

He had stolen in for one last look.

"Ah, Miss Clinton," he said, as he stood looking at Jessie—"she is in heaven now—she has got over the black river. I do not think she found it very deep."

"No, my dear, she was carried over I think in the Lord's arms."

"May I kiss her, do you think?"

"Surely," and she lifted him up on the bed.

He kissed her cold cheek once and again; then sliding down, he thanked Miss Clinton, and followed his father down stairs.

CHAPTER XIX.

EARTH TO EARTH.

"Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" 2 KINGS ii. 14.

WHEN her father was gone, Ellen came up to James and Miss Clinton, who were standing together in the sitting-room window, (for Mr. Blackburn had retired to his own room) looking out upon the moonlight scene. All was quiet in the street, though a good many people were walking about enjoying the serene weather. She stood close to them in silence. A deep sigh first made them conscious of her presence. Miss Clinton turned round, and passed her arm round her. "My dear child" she said, "how are you?"

Ellen had been so occupied in sympathy for the chief sufferers, that she had not thought of herself. She was only conscious of having lost something unspeakably precious. What it was, she hardly realised. But she did feel deeply impressed with the solemn scene of death, which now for the first time she had witnessed. It had indeed been robbed of its terrors, by the peace in which Jessie had departed, and by the merciful absence of almost all suffering; but still, *death*

was death, and fearfully solemn. She tried to smile in answer to Miss Clinton, but it was an ineffectual effort; and the expression on her face was so marked that it struck both her friends, and awakening their interest for her feelings, assisted them to master their own.

"I am afraid you are not well," said James, with great kindness. "You are young, Miss Mor-daunt, to witness sickness and death. Perhaps you have never been present at such a time before?"

"No," said Ellen; "it is the first time."

"Then I can well understand your feelings, for I have experienced them myself. I greatly regret your suffering on our account; let me entreat you to lie down."

"Oh, no," said Ellen, blushing painfully at thus drawing their attention to herself; "I am very glad, very thankful that I was here."

"It was a privilege, indeed," said Miss Clinton, "to see that sweet saint give up her soul without a fear or a groan. It will prove a comfortable lesson to our dear young friend in a short time. Oh, what a thought," she added, looking up at the cloudless sky, where the moon was riding in all her beauty, "that she who was so lately among us is now above those heavens, before her Saviour's throne."

"They have the stars beneath their feet,
Who worship where the seraphs meet,
Before Elohim!"

Ellen raised her eyes, and the sublime thought

elevated her mind; the strain upon her heart relaxed.

"Ah," said James, "who could wish her back? I have loved my sister from early youth. She was my play-fellow in infancy and childhood, and my companion in riper years. She was like my guardian angel, to keep me from evil ways. Her upright, conscientious mind was my refuge, whenever my own judgment failed; her heavenly influence was like a charm, to win me from the world and sin; and now she is gone. If a word or a thought could bring her back, I would not do it; for I know her spirit dwells in the heaven where she longed to be—in her Saviour's arms."

"Let us say, *our* Saviour," exclaimed Miss Clinton. "Ah! He is ours, too."

"Yes," answered James, "here is consolation. Death cannot take this Friend from us. This Man, because He continueth ever, hath 'an unchangeable priesthood.' He once was dead, indeed, but 'He is alive for evermore.'"

Nothing could have been more adapted to Ellen's present state of mind than this conversation. It raised her heart from earthly troubles to that source of peace and joy which 'no man could take from' her. With no uncongenial person to mar, no less spiritual mind to restrain, their converse, she felt as though, for the first time, she understood the meaning of the Communion of Saints. Here was no wild and impetuous grief. The principles professed in times of ease and pleasure, were now

proved, beyond a doubt, to be real and influential; and she regarded the eventful day, now nearly ended, as an unanswerable evidence to the truth of religion, with which to fortify her mind, and repel the enemy, in times of future doubt and temptation. They took some refreshment, and James carried some to his father's room. After reading the seventh chapter of Revelations, they knelt together, and James offered up a touching and appropriate prayer, the burden of which was thanksgiving for the "life and immortality brought to light by the Gospel;" and earnest supplication that they might prove followers of her "who through faith and patience now inherited the promises."

James then proposed that they should retire, as the hour was already late, and held out his hand to bid them good night; but Ellen cast such a wistful look towards Jessie's door, that Miss Clinton said—

"She would like to have one more look; let us all go together, James."

They passed into the chamber of death, and, drawing aside the curtains, gazed upon the pale face, on which a smile still rested. Ellen's tears fell one by one, and then faster still. James took her hand, and said—

"My dear young friend, if she could speak, would she not say, 'Weep not for me.' Ah, my sweet sister, thine is a blessed portion."

"I do not wish to bring her back," said Ellen,

who was greatly relieved by her tears. "It is not wrong to grieve, is it, do you think?"

"Jesus wept," said Miss Clinton, emphatically.

"Yes," answered James, "natural feeling is not sinful, thank God; yet, let us not dwell too much on the earthly part of this sore trial. She is not here; may we not already say, she 'is risen.' Her spirit, *herself*, is living still, and rejoices among the saints in light."

"You think, then," said Miss Clinton, "that the soul passes at once into glory?"

"I do," answered James. "The testimony of Scripture seems to me clear—'Absent from the *body*, present with the Lord.' This evidently refers to the period between death and the resurrection; for it says, '*absent from the body*,' which will not be the case *at* the resurrection."

"That is very satisfactory," said Miss Clinton. "Oh, then, she is actually *now* 'with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of her Father.'"

Mr. Blackburn now entered. He looked very pale, and the traces of tears were plainly visible. James went to him, and supporting him, said—

"My dear father, will you not go to rest?"

"I came for one more look at my beloved child," said Mr. Blackburn. "I thank God, my son, that you are with me."

He drew near, and gently raised her hand. A simple gold ring, she had always worn, was still there. It was too small, even for his little finger.

"My boy Martyn gave her this," he said, "years ago." Then, drawing it off, he placed it on Ellen's hand, saying, in an almost inarticulate voice—

"Wear that, my child, in memory of your friend, and of her father."

This proof of his regard quite overcame Ellen, and Miss Clinton led her from the room. She took her to sleep with her that night, thinking it well she should not be alone. It brought forcibly to Ellen's mind the night at Pietra Santa, and the dear friend who had there shared her room. At first, the memory brought nothing but pain; but the tender-kindness of Miss Clinton, and her genuine sympathy, soon kindled a feeling of thankfulness that such a true Christian should be her companion on this awfully solemn night. Miss Clinton knew very well that a little conversation would relieve her young friend's mind; and sitting down by the side of the open window, she endeavoured to draw from Ellen the principal subject oppressing her heart. Ellen sat down by her side, and with the refreshing breeze blowing over her and the moon-lit sky before her, felt relieved, and thankful to speak her feelings.

"You cannot think, dear Miss Clinton, what I have lost; indeed I hardly know it yet myself. I feel as if I shall never succeed. It is not just now that I am so fearful of going wrong, but when I am in England, at home, oh, Miss Clinton, you do not know all the temptations I shall have."

"I can tell them pretty well, my dear. I am

sure you *will* find difficulties, because, if not, your case would be an exception to the general lot of Christians. Keep a good heart, and remember, in every cloud there will be a rainbow. I hope you will have *some* Christian friends? "

"Yes," answered Ellen; "our clergyman, Mr. Maxwell, is a very good young man. I do not know his wife, but I believe she thinks as he does."

"Does your papa like him, my dear? "

"Oh, yes, I think he does; but he will always look on him as a friend, because he is the son of the dearest friend he ever had."

"And do *you* like him, too? "

"*I!*" said Ellen, looking quickly up at Miss Clinton, with the first genuine smile she had yet given. "Oh, Miss Clinton, I may well like him, for he was the first person who made me think about religion."

"Nay, my dear, the Lord did *that*; but if he was the instrument employed for this, I know well what you must feel for him. How was it? What first, as you say, made you *think*? "

Ellen simply related her first interview with Mr. Maxwell, and the outline of the last twelve months. As this greatly related to the Blackburns, it was at times peculiarly touching and moving to their present feelings; yet there was something soothing in thus dwelling on the dear friend who occupied all their thoughts.

"Well, my dear child," said Miss Clinton, "I

think it is very plain that the Lord has been dealing very mercifully with you. Go on, and prosper. Be careful to keep up a constant study of the Bible, and earnest prayer."

"I do read the Bible, dear Miss Clinton, as much as I can; but I have very little time. I cannot read nearly as much as I wish."

"It is not quantity that signifies," replied Miss Clinton; "the thing is to 'mark, learn, and inwardly digest,' what you read. How much do you read a-day?"

"Oh, I do not know; it varies very much."

"I think," said Miss Clinton, "one chapter a-day, well thought over, is a very fair portion, and enough to satisfy you;" for Miss Clinton began to suspect the true state of the case, that Ellen tormented herself, whenever she was unavoidably prevented reading her fixed quantity.

"But, dear Miss Clinton, you do not know how ignorant I am. I have not yet read all the Bible through, once; and if I read so little, I never shall get through it all."

"My dear, if you read half-a-dozen chapters a-day, and did not properly attend to them, what would you be the better for it? Take my advice, and do not read too much."

"Well, ma'am, I will try your plan: you do not think, then, it is neglecting the Bible if I only read a chapter? and suppose that I am interrupted in that, and have not time to finish it?"

"Well, my dear, I dare say you will find more to do in ten verses than you can manage in one day."

"Oh, yes, I know that; but—"

"But what, my dear? Now, do you know, I think you are very much like a Roman Catholic."

"*Me*, ma'am!"

"Yes, you, my dear. If you were to go now to the bed-room of the mistress of this hotel, perhaps you would find her on her knees, counting her beads. She would not, for the world, go to bed without going over them all, saying a prayer to each. I dare say she is very sincere, and really wishes to please God. You would think it wrong to do that, I dare say, and so do I; but is it not something like it, if you fix a certain quantity of reading, and a certain time for praying, and make yourself unhappy if you are prevented completing it all? I do not mean to say a word against having a set time for these duties; only when you become tied to it, and to a certain quantity of verses, it all degenerates into a form. *That* is the essence of the Romish religion: but we, who read the blessed Word of God, know that He requires us to 'worship Him in spirit and in truth.'"

"Thank you, dear Miss Clinton; I understand you, and I will try to follow your advice."

"Do so, my dear young friend, for I am sure it is Scriptural advice, and therefore it is good. A poor creature, like myself, might lead you wrong, but this is the testimony of God's word. That

blessed creature, who is now in heaven, would tell you the same."

"Ah, my darling Jessie! Dear Miss Clinton, I cannot believe she is gone! it is like a dream."

"It is no dream to her," said Miss Clinton, solemnly: "her dreams are all over. She has awaked out of sleep now."

"Ah, yes:" said Ellen—"how often, at Spezzia, she used to say—

'This life's a dream, an empty show;
But the bright world to which I go,
Hath joys substantial and sincere;
When shall I wake, and find me there!'

"That is a sweet hymn, and just suited to her; but she is singing a sweeter one now," said Miss Clinton.

"A *new* song," said Ellen, mournfully, "which *we* cannot understand."

"Yes, my dear, *we* can; it is a song *angels* cannot sing—to the praise of your Saviour and mine."

Thus they talked for some time, and then lay down till morning.

Mr. Mordaunt returned early to them, and assisted them in every possible way to make the necessary arrangements. When evening came on, he took Ellen back to Leghorn. He spoke very kindly to her on the way, and she used all her skill to draw out his opinions and feelings. She did not, indeed, altogether succeed; but what he did say, more than sufficed to comfort and encourage her.

On their arrival, Ellen went into her mother's

room. Mrs. Mordaunt held out her arms to receive her, and neither of them could speak for tears. Mrs. Mordaunt looked pale and agitated, and had evidently been weeping a great deal. Presently, they were better able to talk, and Ellen gave her mother all such particulars of that sad day and night, as concerned their friends. Having done this, she went to put off her things and refresh herself a little. Going into the nursery, as she passed, she saw Robert seated on a stool at Dinah's feet, reading aloud to her the account of Christian and Hopeful passing the river, and their reception into the celestial city. Their faces were turned from her, and she stood still to listen. Deeply touching was it to Ellen to hear her little brother, in his clear but now peculiarly solemn tone, thus unconsciously taking up, as it were, the word that she had been compelled to relinquish, and to perceive the evident interest with which he was listened to. He read the beautiful account of the less troubled friend supporting his fainting brother; and when he read the triumphant words of Christian, as at length light broke in upon his darkened soul, the old woman interposed an "Ah!" of so emphatic a nature, that Ellen could not but be assured it arose from the depths of her heart. The glowing conversation between the pilgrims and the shining ones followed, which he read in a voice of exultation, as if he himself had been there, and seen and heard it all; and then he paused—

"And now, Dinah, there comes such a shocking

thing, I do not know if I will read it; but yet, I will too, because it is good to know it. But oh, Dinah! think, if it should happen to us."

"I hope not, if it's *bad*, master Robert," said Dinah.

"But *hoping* will not do any good, Dinah; he *hoped* it would not happen to him, and yet it *did*." Then, in a low and trembling voice, he read the fearful recital of Ignorance's doom.

You said true, master Robert," said Dinah, wiping her eyes: "it was a shocking thing; to come after that other beautiful part, too. Well, dear, Miss Jessie's now in that blessed place. The Lord grant we may all follow her, some day."

"I *know she is there*," answered Robert, looking up through the open window at the deep blue sky, in which the first stars were twinkling. He gazed with those clear light grey eyes of his, undimmed by a single tear, trying to fancy her in her snow-white robes, amid scenery more glorious than even *his* imagination could conceive.

Ellen now walked in, and they both turned round.

"Dear me, Miss Ellen, it is you;" and Dinah got up.

"Is Mr. Blackburn here?" asked Robert, as she kissed him.

"No;" answered Ellen, "he comes to-morrow morning."

"Well, Miss Ellen, dear; so that sweet young lady's gone. Well, she's in heaven, that's sure.

You look pale, miss, I dare say you've been fretting—poor dear—you were such friends."

Ellen's tears came again at old Dinah's sympathy.

"She died so happily, Dinah; and though she had been so good, it was not that made her happy; it was only Jesus Christ who comforted her then."

"Ah! miss Ellen, I wish I was as good as she was, and as you are. I often think of you, miss, and how you used to read the Bible to me. I think more of it now than I did then."

"Ah! Dinah, I am glad to hear this."

"Well now, one can see your heart in your eyes, miss; it goes to my heart that you should care so much for me. Well, miss, I'll just say this, that when I come to die, please God I'm in my right senses (and it can't be far off, for I'm sixty-eight years of age), I'll just say, like the poor man in the Testament, 'God be merciful to me a sinner;' for surely, I have been a great one."

No words of studied consolation could have been more comforting and inspiring to Ellen just now than these. She could not speak her feelings, but mentally thanked God for His great goodness to her. Her eyes, however, as Dinah said, spoke sufficiently. She turned to Robert.

"And so you have been reading to Dinah, Robert?"

"Oh, yes, Ellen, I have been reading that *beautiful* part about the river of death. I have read it before, over and over, but it seems as if I understood it better this time; for have not I seen it now?"

Just then Annie and Willie, who had been to see their papa, came in for their tea, and to look for Robert, and Ellen went to her own room.

The following morning Jessie's earthly remains were consigned to their long home, in the cypress-bounded cemetery at Leghorn. Mr. Mordaunt, Robert, and Miss Clinton attended, with Mr. Blackburn and his son. Ellen sighed as Miss Clinton accompanied them; she would so have liked to go, but her father's word was peremptory, and she could only read over the beautiful service at home, and join them in heart.

Mr. Mordaunt brought the whole party home with him. Mr. Blackburn, though much dejected, was very calm; now that his child was gone, his whole desire seemed to be, to return to his ministerial duties in his own country, and labour there for the remainder of his life.

Miss Clinton remained a week with them, and then returned to her family at the Baths of Lucca. All were very sorry to bid her good-bye, but Ellen felt it the most acutely. As long as she had this kind friend she had not so much missed Jessie. Having one to talk to and to cheer her, she had been able to dwell on the blessedness of her friend, without so many personal lamentations; but when she was gone, the tremendous blank was perceived, and with all her efforts, she could not for some time effectually bear up against it.



CHAPTER XX.

THE VOYAGE HOME.

"Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee."—DEUTERONOMY viii. 2.

It was now the end of October. The great heat of summer had passed away, but the weather was very mild and genial. Mrs. Mordaunt was certainly better in health than when they left England, and, though still delicate, she became restlessly anxious to return home. So strong was this desire, that all thoughts of another winter abroad were banished, and packing commenced. It was determined they should all return the same way they came, that very same vessel being on the point of sailing from Leghorn to England. They would have travelled by land, but the young and delicate baby, and even Mrs. Mordaunt, were not equal to such an undertaking.

There was much that was trying in this arrangement. To Mr. Blackburn, especially, the same vessel could not fail of recalling, almost too vividly, the voyage out, when his beloved child shared all with him; but though a man of the deepest feeling, he was not weak, and he allowed no extravagant indulgence of grief for her who, he doubted not,

was enjoying perfect bliss. Yet it was almost more than he could bear, when they all embarked, and each object, with its strong associations, met his view. He went below, and alone in prayer sought for strength in this his hour of need.

And where was Ellen, then? She, too, was feeling acutely the great and painful change. Circumstances prevented her retiring to a solitary place for prayer, and yet too painfully she felt she was alone, though others were around her. Her spirit was alone, and she felt that loneliness keenly, while, standing on the open deck, she gazed on the shores now so deeply endeared to her because of *that* which was being left behind. She thought of her visit with Dinah and the children, the evening before, to the very spot; and memory pictured it afresh to her imagination, as she had seen it then, amid the long dark shadows of the trees, through which the red beams of the setting sun streamed brilliantly.

"It looks just the same at this very moment," thought she; and the tears fell fast as, in memory, she read anew the simple inscription—

To the Memory of Jessie,

The only and beloved Daughter of the Rev. James Blackburn,
Minister of Christ at ——— in Scotland.

She slept in Jesus on the 16th of September, 18—,
in the 22nd year of her age."

"To her to live was Christ, and to die was gain."

"And why should I mourn for her," thought she; "how selfish I am;" and she raised her eyes

from the long flat coast to the magnificent range of mountains, reaching from far inland to the sea, and now tinted with a soft pink hue. They reared their peaks up into the sky; on the highest pinnacle a long shadowy cloud was resting, and she remembered how Jessie used to love those hills, especially when as now the top was hidden by a cloud, for she said it reminded her of the camp of Israel, and the mysterious cloud which concealed the presence of the Lord. But now she felt unable to receive comfort from this thought; the association with *death* was still too strong. There was no one with whom to share these memories, and a most wretched, desponding feeling was creeping over her mind, when she began to reflect how ungratefully she was forgetting her best and unchanging Friend, whom death could not remove, or distance separate from her. 'I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely,' was the verse that came soothingly to her heart, and when presently her father called her to go down, *she* was the most cheerful of the little party.

They sailed on prosperously, but the uncertain appearance of the weather induced the captain to steer so near the coast, that the principal landmarks were plainly visible. The towns of Spezzia and Porto Venere, and the villages of Talara, Lerici, and San Terenzo, were clearly in sight, as also the half-verdant, half-rocky, islands of Tino and Palmaria. Touching as the recollections suggested by these scenes were, there was not one of

the party who did not come for another look. But they were gazed at in silence; even little Willie seemed to catch the saddening impulse, and spoke not. James Blackburn, who had not the same remembrances as the rest, presently took the little fellow in his arms (he was a special favourite), and walking to a little distance from the rest, began to ask him concerning the different places. With the wind playing among his fair curls, he pointed with his dimpled finger to such parts as he could remember, making sundry pauses every now and then to hug and kiss his friend. In fact, James would have gathered but little information, had not Annie spied them out and joined them; and finding what he was asking Willie, she correctly directed him to every discernible place. James was much pleased with the manner in which she went through her simple details; her language, though childish, was correct, and her allusions to Jessie were so made as showed she did not forget that she had been the dear sister of the person she was speaking to.

Mr. Blackburn and James conducted divine service every Sunday, and now Mr. Mordaunt and Ellen never failed to attend. Our young friend felt this a great privilege; but her nicest hour of the day was one in the afternoon, when, by Mr. Blackburn's request, she used to go and read and talk with him. Her father could not bring himself to refuse anything Mr. Blackburn asked, and therefore gave his consent to this arrangement.

How much she heard of Jessie during those quiet hours—of her earliest days, when her parents hailed with delight her love for holy things—a love whose commencement seemed to date from the first dawn of the understanding, for she seemed, like John of old, to be “filled with the Holy Ghost, even from her mother’s womb.”

She heard of the time when, with enlarged understanding and riper views, Jessie first approached the Table of the Lord, and gave herself openly to Him.

“And you, my dear young friend,” said Mr. Blackburn, when he related this to Ellen, “you will shortly, I trust, do the same; may the Lord give you a like childlike faith and devoted heart.”

“Ah, sir,” said Ellen, “though sometimes I do wish I might soon be admitted to that privilege, yet at others I feel afraid of it. There seems something so mysterious in that service, that I fear I shall approach unworthily.”

“My dear child,” said Mr. Blackburn, “you are entertaining a wrong view of that holy ordinance, when you call it mysterious. There is nothing of that nature in it, save the *love* which it commemorates. *That*, if you will, is a mystery indeed. What has induced you to form such an opinion?”

“I do not exactly know, sir,” answered Ellen; “unless it is the way papa and mamma seem to regard it. They always look graver than usual, on the days when they mean to go; and mamma was

only the other day speaking of the overpowering awe, with which she sometimes partakes of it."

"The Christian should indeed approach the Lord's-table with reverence," answered Mr. Blackburn; "but not with an undefined awe of some mystery which he cannot fathom. He goes in obedience to Christ's command, 'This do in remembrance of Me;' and by his outward action, seals the inward reception of Christ by faith. It is as it were a symbolical picture, or representation of His death, and in eating that bread and drinking that wine the true believer feeds on Christ; not carnally, but spiritually by faith. There is no mysterious change in those elements, no transubstantiation, or consubstantiation; let no one persuade you that there is. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, sir;" said Ellen, "I think I do." Then she added more diffidently: "Is it wrong, sir, to look upon the sacraments as evidences of the truth of religion? They seem to me such powerful ones."

"No, my dear young friend, certainly not *wrong*—on the contrary, I agree with you in thinking they are most blessed proofs of all that the Gospel reveals. Established during the Saviour's lifetime, and continued to the present hour, they are undeniable evidences, and greatly calculated to strengthen our weak faith."

"Your remark, Miss Mordaunt," said James, "reminds me of a young girl named Catherine Forster, who resided in my parish, and in whom I

was greatly interested. She had been religiously brought up, but when about your age, she was much harassed by doubts as to the truth of religion. She borrowed books on the evidences of Christianity, and read them eagerly, and by this means some of her difficulties were removed; but many still remained. When the time came for her, among other young persons, to be instructed previous to admission to the Lord's-supper, I was not aware of her state of mind, and I was surprised and displeased at the speculating tendency of some of her questions. I thought they might be injurious to the others, and therefore checked her rather severely. She coloured, and seemed distressed, but asked no more; yet her evident anxiety made me seek a more private interview. Then she told me of her doubts, and how perplexed she had long been, and I shall never forget her earnestness as she concluded: 'Indeed, Mr. Blackburn, I do *wish* it all true; it is dreadful to me to think it *may* not be; but doubts will rise up in my heart, and I cannot get rid of them; and how can I go thus to the Lord's table, and mock him with perhaps a pretended faith, while all the time He sees I have none?' After much conversation, I felt certain that the poor girl's faith was genuine, though weak. She complained that her mind was formed differently to other people's, for she could not cordially believe things that she could not *see*, and she did not think that she should ever be *sure* of any thing which did not appear to her outward senses. But

I saw that she believed more than she was able to allow: that her judgment was as convinced as external evidence could make it, with a mind like hers, whose nature it was to call in question the reality of the very things which she most anxiously desired to be true. I advised her to leave her questionings for the present, and to come as she was. 'What,' said she, half-frightened, 'come doubting?' 'Yes,' I said, 'come doubting; listen to me! Do you disbelieve entirely—are you perfectly convinced there is no God at all—no Saviour—no Revelation?' 'Oh, no;' she said, starting back in horror at the idea. 'I am not *certain*.' 'Then,' said I, 'come to His table, saying, "Lord, I believe," is not this true? for you do believe a little, though you may not be able like Peter to say, "I believe and am *sure*." You have *some* faith.' 'Yes,' she said, hesitatingly; 'but my belief is not *steady*.' 'Then,' said I, 'come finishing that sentence, "help Thou mine unbelief." Do you not wish your doubts removed?' 'Oh, yes,' she replied earnestly. Well, she did so come, and the first time I saw her afterwards, I said, 'Well, Catherine, how are you now? How fared it with your soul at the Lord's-table?' 'Oh,' she answered, 'I did not think I was rejected; when I partook of the bread and wine, I thought Jesus himself said to me, "Reach hither thy finger and behold My hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side, and be not faithless but believing." I thought it was just for the doubting He had

instituted that ordinance—just for those who like Thomas, must *see*, or they cannot believe, and like him I said, “My Lord and my God.”

“Oh, thank you, Mr. James,” said Ellen, who had listened with deep interest to this account of one whose feelings *she* could so well understand. “I shall never forget poor Catherine. What became of her?”

James smiled a little, and said, “She is now living with a married sister, at some distance from her home; but she will soon return there, to be present at the marriage of another sister.”

Ellen understood his smile directly, and said, “Oh, Mr. James, if ever papa should accomplish the visit to Scotland he talks of, and takes me with him, I hope Catherine will be somewhere near, that I may see her. I am sure we should understand each other.”

“I think you would,” said Mr. Blackburn, “Catherine *is* like you in some respects; but she is more demonstrative and enthusiastic. You would have one bond of union; for she too loved my Jessie.”

The door now opened, and Robert holding little Willie by the hand appeared.

“May I come in, sir?” he said. “I want to show Willie the rainbow from the window, and mamma was sitting reading in hers, and said we must go away.”

“Come in, my children;” said Mr. Blackburn, opening wide the little window. “There, can you see *now*?”

The two boys stood silently looking at the beautiful bow, of which the whole arch was plainly seen. At length Mr. Blackburn said—

“You know, my boy, what that rainbow means?”

“Oh, yes, sir,” said Robert. “I have been telling Willie; it means that God will never more send a flood to destroy the earth.”

“Did *you* or *I* hear God make that promise to Noah?”

“No; we were not born then.”

“Then how do you know there will never be another flood?”

“Because I can see the rainbow which God put then in the cloud, and I know that God is looking at it too, and remembers His promise.”

“Quite right; now can you tell me what God called the rainbow, when He put it there?”

“Was it not a *token* of His covenant?” said Robert.

“Yes;” said Mr. Blackburn. “Do you understand what that means?”

“No;” said Robert. “I only remember the Bible uses those words.”

“A token is something that we *can hear or see*, given us to make us believe something that we *cannot* see. We cannot see the covenant which God made, nor hear His promise; but we *can* see the beautiful rainbow, and it is a *token* that God keeps His promises. The two miracles that Moses showed the children of Israel—the rod that was

changed into a serpent—his hand that became leprous—were *tokens* that God had really spoken to him. These were Old Testament tokens. Can you give me one from the New Testament?”

Robert thought, and then said — “I do not know, unless the tongues of fire, that came on the Apostles, were.”

“Yes; those tongues of fire were the Spirit of God. Who promised to send the Spirit from heaven when He returned to His Father?”

“Jesus Christ, sir.”

“Then, what was the descent of the Spirit a token of?”

“That Jesus Christ was really at the right hand of God, and that He had remembered His promise.”

“Quite right, my boy.” Then, turning to Ellen, Mr. Blackburn continued: “This will also serve to illustrate what we were speaking of just now. The sacraments are tokens of the Gospel covenant, just as the rainbow was of old, and still continues, a token of the covenant between God and all flesh, never more to send a flood. The water, in baptism, is a token, or seal, of the grace of God, promised to all believers; the bread and wine, in the Lord’s Supper, are also tokens, and that in three ways: They are tokens of the actual offering up of Christ’s body, and the shedding of His blood on the cross, as a ransom for many, for He said, ‘This do in remembrance of Me;’ they are tokens of the source of the believer’s daily life, for He said again, ‘Ex-

cept ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you ;' and they are tokens that His Church are still to look out for His coming again, and for the final marriage-supper of the Lamb, 'for as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come.' "

"See," said little Willie, "the colours are all fading away ; it is nearly gone."

"Yes," said Robert, "there is nothing that does not fade away ; it is only in heaven that nothing fades. Do you know, Willie," he added, in a low voice, "there is a rainbow there that never fades."

No one but Ellen knew the secret to this remark of Robert's. She had that morning been explaining and teaching him the fourth verse of 1 Peter i., "The inheritance that fadeth not away ;" and he, with his usual eagerness, had been seeking out the many things which on earth are transitory. The leaves, the flowers, the clouds, had all been mentioned ; at length the rainbow had struck him, and Ellen had shown him the verse which speaks of the emblematic rainbow round the throne. He, with a child's freshness, received it as a literal fact ; and the beautiful bow of promise was associated, in his mind, with that unchanging arch in heaven, and with *her* whose eyes he imagined were now enjoying that refreshing sight. But Ellen said nothing now of all this ; it only served to encourage her, and to prove that instruction given to children almost always takes a steady hold.

But we must hasten on. Without any danger, or violent storms, they landed at Liverpool in the first week of November. Here Mr. Blackburn spoke of leaving them, but Mr. Mordaunt would not hear of it.

"No, no," he said; "come first with me to my family-seat, and rest there for a short time: besides, you know my Robert must come home to see his brother before he sets off with you. I know"—and he looked good-humouredly at James—"I know it is all that young fellow's doing, he is in such a hurry to see his future bride."

James smiled. "To prove I have no hand in it, I will join in your kind solicitations to my father. Do, my dear father, agree to Mr. Mordaunt's request. You may be sure little Robert will like to see his brother after so long an absence."

Thus urged, Mr. Blackburn consented. To explain James's remark, it must be added, that Mr. Blackburn had begged to be allowed to continue Robert's education for the next few years; and his father agreed to this for several reasons. One was, that the child himself clung to Mr. Blackburn with a peculiar and ardent affection; then, again, it would be a great advantage to Robert to be under the charge of so well-informed a person; but a further and more powerful reason still, was the thought, that he might thus execute, in a measure, his promise to Jessie, for it was evident Mr. Blackburn himself longed to keep the boy near him. That Ellen rejoiced at this need not be told. It

would keep up the tie between themselves and the Blackburns, and might prove an eternal blessing to her little brother.

They started the following morning for Mordaunt Place. As the train stopped at the station nearest to it, little Willie, who was looking out of the window, shouted "Arthur! I see Arthur!" and in a few minutes more the fine enthusiastic boy was amongst them, nearly smothering them all by his warm embraces.

Ever mindful of his friends, Mr. Mordaunt desired James to take care of Mrs. Mordaunt, while the himself attended to Mr. Blackburn, and got the luggage properly arranged; and soon installed in two carriages, they drove swiftly along. As they drew nearer home, Ellen kept watching every turn of the road, and each familiar object that opened on her sight, and she pointed them out to her friends.

"That house on the little hill is where the doctor lives; he is a very kind man, and a great friend of papa's. That long line of shrubs is a nursery garden; and there is the church and the parsonage," she added, her colour rising as the trees of the burying-ground came once more in sight.

Mr. Blackburn looked kindly at her, and said, "It is a great blessing to return to a Christian land, and to Christian churches undisguised."

"Oh, yes," said Ellen: "that is just what I feel."

But she forbore to speak of the church-yard scene, then in her thoughts. It might be too painful a subject. Passing along a winding road, she caught sight of her father's carriage which went before, and she saw him take off his cap and wave it to some one on the road. She looked eagerly out, and saw a gentleman and lady, with a nurse and little child behind them, standing on the green bank, watching the carriages.

"Oh! it is Mr. Maxwell," exclaimed she, with unfeigned delight, and waved her handkerchief as they passed.

It was getting dark when they arrived. By the time they drove up the avenue and stopped at the large door, the inmates of the first carriage had alighted, and Mr. Mordaunt was engaged in seeing the loose parcels collected; and there was Arthur, too, shouting to the servants and loading the gardener's boy with more than he could well carry. Mr. Mordaunt came up and opened the carriage-door—

"Well, my dear sir, how are you? You look pale. Ah, we must doctor you; the fresh air of our country village will assist to renovate you. Let me assist you, my dear friend," he added in a deeper tone, whose kindness spoke volumes to Mr. Blackburn.

"Let me, papa, take Mr. Blackburn up-stairs; he is *mine*, you know," said Robert.

"Yours, is he?" said his father, smiling; "well, up with you then, my boy. But stay! Have you forgotten the way?"

"Oh, no!" and taking Mr. Blackburn's hand he led him up stairs into the drawing-room, where there was already a lamp on the table, and a bright fire in the grate, and all was looking cheery and comfortable. He pulled an arm-chair to the fire, and placing Mr. Blackburn in it, he proceeded to take from him his hat and gloves, and then stood still as if to survey his own operations. Presently Mr. Mordaunt himself came in, and walking up towards them, said—

"Well, my dear sir, are you a little rested?"

"I am very well, thank God," replied Mr. Blackburn. "Your little son has been doing the honours of your house, and has made *me* at home before any one else, I think."

"That is right," said Mr. Mordaunt, taking hold of Robert's head from behind by both hands under his chin; "for once you have used your senses to some purpose. Now you may go and help your sister and Arthur."

As soon as all the luggage had been conveyed inside, Mr. Mordaunt took his two friends to their rooms, where it was evident female hands had already been arranging every thing in the most orderly manner.

"Who has taken such good care of us?" said Mr. Blackburn, pointing to a glass of milk and some biscuits which stood on the table.

"That is my wife's doing; she felt herself unable to wait for tea, and so she judged you must feel the same. That is the golden rule, Mr. Black-

burn, I believe. Now make yourselves quite at home; ring, if you want any thing, without hesitation, and if we do not see you sooner, I will send for you when tea is ready."

When Mr. Mordaunt was gone, the father and son looked round with grateful hearts and tearful eyes at all the kind arrangements that had been made, and at the English comforts that surrounded them. A blazing fire was cheerfully burning, and the shutters were warmly closed. The sound of the wind stirring the boughs of trees, told them the near vicinity of the garden; but it was now quite dark, and they could see nothing outside. Mr. Blackburn sat down with his hands on his knees, as if in deep thought. His affectionate son, having made the needful arrangements, came and stood near him.

"My dear son," said he at last, looking up from his reverie, "I have been thinking of the great goodness of God in having provided such friends in our hours of need. Just when bereavement was sent, such blessings are heaped upon us as if He feared lest we should think He smote in anger; but no, not one doubt of that nature has there been within my heart. I know, I feel it is all mercy. But Mr. Mordaunt's kindness—I can never return it. Ever since I first knew him it has been the same, and his goodness to my child, his consideration for her—denying himself for her comfort." Then, he added, in a lower tone, "The Lord grant that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day."

At this moment little Annie summoned them to tea. Mrs. Mordaunt was very tired, but she would not retire till after tea, so anxious was she that nothing might in the least damp the ardour of their welcome to their friends. Arthur's wild spirits were hushed into quietness and propriety after his introduction to Mr. Blackburn, and he exerted himself in showing him every attention possible.

"But, Arthur, my boy," said his father, "why did Maxwell send you to the station and not come himself? and why did he not come to-night? I suppose he was delighted to get rid of a troublesome rogue like you."

"No, papa, it was not that; but as you were a large party, he thought he might be in the way on first arriving. I do not think he wanted to get rid of me—at least, I know *I* did not want to get rid of him."

Mr. Blackburn smiled. "That is right, my boy; true love is trusting and confiding."

"I may well trust Mr. Maxwell, sir," said Arthur, turning his blue eyes full on Mr. Blackburn with a sweet open expression, "for he has been a good friend to me. He and Mrs. Maxwell have been like father and mother to me while my own were away; and next to *them*, I love them better than any body on earth."

Ellen looked at Arthur while he was saying this, and wondered whether or not it was her fancy that he laid a stress on the two last words. She could

not tell; this, however, was evident, that Arthur was greatly improved.

All were glad to retire early that night. When Ellen was once more in her own little room, so many thoughts pressed in that she felt perfectly bewildered. While engaged in the bustle of attending to others, her own feelings had been little realised, but *now*—

The first and overpowering thought was the immense change that had passed over her since she was last there. Never before had she been so fully aware of it as now, when, in the sight of the very spot where, in such despair, she had first ventured to pray in her own words. The delightful, but humiliating, thoughts that this remembrance gave rise to were so strong, that she sat down in that very place and burst into tears. The next action was to offer her heartfelt thanksgivings for the great and sovereign mercy shown to her, and to beseech, with a fervour and confidence to which she had long been a stranger, that she might have grace to persevere to the end. It were vain to attempt to follow the chain of thought which followed, or rather the numbers of scattered fragments of thought that hurried in upon her mind. Suffice it to say, it was long before she slept, and when she did, the features and voice of Jessie Blackburn mingled with her dreams.

CHAPTER XXI.

FAREWELLS.

“ Though oft we seem to tread alone
Life's barren waste with thorns o'ergrown,
Thy voice of love, in gentlest tone,
Still whispers, 'Cling to Me.' ”

THE following morning, Ellen was engaged putting up some books in the study with Annie, when Robert came in to tell her that Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell were come. Her mother was busy, and her father was out with Arthur and James Blackburn, and Mr. Blackburn was in the drawing-room alone. It was not this, however, so much as her own delight to see them, that made her throw down the book in her hand and run out directly.

She was too late to introduce them to Mr. Blackburn. Whether they had done it for themselves, or whether Robert had performed the ceremony she could not tell, but they were talking together as she entered. The noise of the door made them turn, and Mr. Maxwell came quickly forward to meet her; his greeting was most warm and cordial, and Ellen's no less so; and then he introduced her to his wife, who was a very pleasing-looking person.

Mr. Maxwell had concluded, from expressions in the letters passing between the Mordaunt family

and himself and Arthur, that the interest Ellen had shown in sacred things before leaving England had continued. He knew all about their intimacy with the Blackburns, and soon felt certain that the latter were truly Christian people.

But Ellen's being obliged to show to her parents all the letters she wrote, prevented her writing as openly to her brother as her feelings often prompted her to do. On one occasion only, and that was after Jessie's death, she had enclosed in her mother's letter to Arthur, a few lines, in which she dwelt principally upon the source of Jessie's hope and peace; adding her earnest desires that he, and all dear to her, might have the same Friend at their last hour. From this, which Mr. Maxwell had seen, he had felt his hopes regarding Ellen much confirmed; especially as it came in contrast with that from Mrs. Mordaunt, in which it was enclosed. Hers was, as usual, written under the impulse of the moment, full of strong feeling, and though encouraging in its expressions, far from satisfactory. From these letters, however, he had obtained a very correct idea of the touching circumstances to which they related, and felt confident such a scene could not fail of having a beneficial effect on Ellen's susceptible mind. Still he was not at all aware of the progress Ellen had made; and now, as he marked the subdued gravity of her manner, after the first greeting was over, her respectful and affectionate behaviour to Mr. Blackburn, and her undisguised cordiality to himself and

his wife, he ardently hoped that these pleasing traits were the fruits of a renewed heart.

"Well, Miss Mordaunt," he said, "have the skies of Italy sent you back with distaste to chill old England?"

"Oh, no, Mr. Maxwell. I have often thought of what you said, the day before we left, of the differences between England and Italy. I am delighted to be again in dear Protestant England."

"And I am delighted to hear you say so;" said he.

"But," resumed Ellen, her love of truth prompting her to speak, "you must not think I have returned quite without regret. On the contrary, I think I should be downright unhappy if I were told I was never to visit that sunny land again."

"Indeed! May I ask the reason?"

"Oh, many reasons. The lovely scenery, beautiful climate (she glanced towards Mr. Blackburn, to see if he were sufficiently engaged talking to Mrs. Maxwell, to permit of her speaking freely). I was happier there than ever in my life before, and," she added, "more unhappy too."

Her look at Mr. Blackburn had explained her meaning.

"But yet, Miss Mordaunt, perhaps even that sorrow had an alleviation which rendered it preferable to *some* periods you once called pleasure?"

A quick answering glance beamed from Ellen's eyes as she answered—

"Yes ; indeed it had."

"I rejoice to hear you say this, Miss Mordaunt," said Mr. Maxwell. "I know well the privilege of witnessing the conquest of the Christian over the last enemy. It is not only a great source of comfort as regards the departing spirit ; but an encouragement to ourselves. We see the valley of death is not necessarily a dark valley."

"Oh, no ! it was not dark to her," said Ellen. "She said, His rod and staff comforted her, and she feared no evil."

"What blessed evidences these things are," said Mr. Maxwell, "of the reality of the Christian faith. At such a solemn moment, what but a full conviction that life and immortality are before us, could support us ; and what but a Divine and unseen agency could give that conviction !"

"Yes," answered Ellen, "that was just what I felt." She might have added more ; but just then, her father and the walking party entered, followed by her mother, and the greeting was very warm.

The following fortnight was spent in the interchange of social meetings between the families at Mordaunt Hall, and the Parsonage. The three clergymen were much together, and a warm friendship springing out of union of feeling was the result. One day, during a pleasant country walk, Mr. Maxwell remarked the change that had passed over Ellen Mordaunt.

"Yes, indeed ;" answered Mr. Blackburn. "I think there is little doubt that with her 'old

things have passed away, and all things become new.'"

"I believe," said Mr. Maxwell, "your family have, under God, been the chosen instruments for this work?"

"I thank God," answered Mr. Blackburn, "that my beloved child's last days were hallowed by being permitted to confirm and strengthen her young friend's feeble steps, and to further her progress towards heaven; but, my good friend," and he laid his hand kindly on Mr. Maxwell's shoulder, "you were yourself the honoured instrument to begin the good work."

Mr. Maxwell started, and looked at him. "Was this indeed the case?" he asked with great earnestness. "She said a few words of this nature during the only conversation worth calling such I ever had with her, but we were interrupted before she could fully explain herself."

"It was indeed so," continued Mr. Blackburn. "She never mentioned your name without affection, and she regards you as her spiritual father. Her character is one of that peculiarly sincere and genuine description, which once having discovered the truth, keeps it, and makes it a part of herself. In life too, she bears evidence of a change, and I am not without great hopes that the reality of her religion is making its own silent way with both her parents."

"Do you really think so?" enquired Mr. Maxwell with great interest.

"I do, indeed," replied Mr. Blackburn. "I shall feel greatly mistaken if you do not find both Mordaunt and his wife better disposed, and more ready to listen than when they left. Mordaunt himself is a man of much reserve as regards his own feelings; but I have marked many things, and hailed them as tokens for good. His kindness to my beloved child, and to myself, surpasses the power of speech. Ah, sir, it may seem as if I were not in a situation to judge impartially; but I think on a man of his refined feelings, intercourse with my beloved child could not fail of making an impression. Such, I believe, was the case; but, as I before said, the visible improvement of his own child has worked its silent way. She has proved herself in earnest; she has also proved that the doctrines of free grace are the very reverse of Antinomianism. Poor child, she has difficulties in her path; for even if Mordaunt is seeking after truth, as I trust he is, it will be long before he lays aside a certain jesting manner, which must prevent her enjoying any communion with him on the subject uppermost in her thoughts. But, with his peculiar character, we must have patience."

"My dear sir," said Mr. Maxwell, "you have little idea of the pleasure your words are conveying to me. You may, perhaps, have heard of the long friendship between him and my dear father, from early boyhood, and lasting through life — though one was brought up amid the scenes of domestic and fashionable life, and the other (my father)

passed through the ordeal of a military career. He was several years older than Mordaunt, and his constitution was undermined by the hot, tropical climate, where he spent several years. It was only when stationed with his regiment at Gibraltar, and when disease had reduced his once powerful frame, that the truth reached his heart. Then it was affecting to witness the grief with which he looked back upon his long years of intercourse with his friend, so wasted, so worse than unprofitable. His own soul had found rest and peace in the Saviour, and this sin, and every other, was rolled over on Him as the all-sufficient substitute; but this did not prevent his deep regret, his sincere repentance, his earnest longings that the same light which had shone on him might beam on his friend; and, with his dying breath, he charged me to spare no effort for his salvation. It was with this charge in view, and struck at the opportunity offered, that I accepted Mr. Mordaunt's offer of the Church in this village. With prayer that I might be made a blessing to the family of my father's friend, I came. An answer to this seemed in some measure vouchsafed, when he proposed leaving his eldest boy under my care, and the friendly affection of Mrs. Mordaunt also encouraged me. Judge, then, of what I must feel, when I find that the Lord has, indeed, blessed my ministry to his daughter, and, through her, to himself. I can only say, 'Not unto me, O Lord, not unto me, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth's sake.' "

Mr. Blackburn pressed his hand kindly, and said: "I can fully understand your feelings, and my heart and prayers will be with you while I am absent from you in the flesh. You must give me yours, also, my dear brother, for I, too, have a share in the work, since his dear child, Robert, is to be under my charge. I consider it no small privilege. I need your remembrance before the Lord, also, for myself; for, when I look back upon past years, I am ready to say, with Naomi, 'I went out full, and am returned again empty.' "

A look of deep sympathy was returned, and a warm promise of continued and Christian remembrance.

The fortnight soon wore away, and Mr. Blackburn begged to be detained no longer; it was also absolutely necessary for James to go, so Mr. Mordaunt refrained from urging a longer stay. Poor Ellen dared not trust herself to think of their departure. With them, all that remained of her beloved Jessie would depart, saving, indeed, the memories treasured deep within her soul. As long as she could wait on Mr. Blackburn, and contribute to his or James's comfort, it seemed as if she was still waiting on *her*, proving her love to *her*. While they remained, too, a certain holy atmosphere seemed to prevail in the house; there was also family prayer; but what the reverse of this state of things would be, she could not bear to think.

Still it came, that dreaded day, and Ellen stood

at the drawing-room window, putting a last stitch into a warm handkerchief for Robert, and waiting for them all to come in, and say farewell. Presently the little fellow came in, and she turned to him.

"Now, Robert, you will be a good boy, and learn a great deal, and you will love Mr. Blackburn?" Her voice faltered.

"Oh, yes, Ellen, I *do* love him, you know. If I did not, do you think I should like to go away from home?"

"But there is One better than Mr Blackburn," said Ellen; "you will love *Him* too, Robert?"

The boy's clear eye grew grave and solemn, while he answered—

"I will try, Ellen, dear."

"That is the last thing I ask of you, darling Robert; do not forget it;" and she kissed his forehead.

And now all was ready. Mr. Mordaunt too, and Arthur, with their great coats on, all ready to go with their friends to the station. Mrs. Mordaunt looking very much distressed and agitated, was wrapping Robert up in every imaginable thing, and Ellen standing mournfully by, holding his cap. Mr. Mordaunt gave the word, "all is ready," and Mr. Blackburn came up again to thank Mrs. Mordaunt for all her kindness, and James stooped to kiss his little favourites. Poor Ellen could do nothing but hold Mr. Blackburn's hand, and looking up at him with tearful eyes, whisper, "Pray

for me, dear Mr. Blackburn." He laid his hand on her head and blessed her, and then hurried into the carriage. Then James came to thank and bid goodbye to Mrs. Mordaunt, who was in too much grief to speak, and to Ellen, who, controlling herself better, managed to say—

"God bless you, Mr. James, and make you very happy."

He was greatly touched by her kind remembrance of his prospects, and again shook hands, saying—

"Be of good courage, and *He* shall strengthen thine heart."

They both got in before Robert, in order to leave him to say goodbye to his family alone. The tears were in his eyes, but he mastered them nobly, and putting up his face all round to be kissed, and nearly wringing Dinah's neck off, who stood by crying, followed his friends into the carriage. It drove away, and Ellen stood on the door step, looking after it till it could be seen no more, and then ran up to the highest floor to catch the very last glimpse of it, till the winding road conveyed it out of sight.

Having seen their friends whirled off in the long and crowded train, Mr. Mordaunt and Arthur re-entered the carriage to return.

"Who is that bowing to you?" asked his father, as signs of mutual recognition passed between Arthur and a respectable looking man on a shaggy pony.

"Oh, that is Mr. Raymond, the Sunday-school master," answered Arthur, "He is a sort of carrier between our place and this town. He knows me because I used to go there when I was with Mr. Maxwell. He teaches the boys, and Mrs. Maxwell the girls, and Mr. Maxwell used to come in the evening, and address them."

"And what did *you* do there?" asked his father. "Oh, I used to have a class and teach. Mr. Maxwell used to say, there were not enough teachers for the number of children; and yet Mrs. Maxwell had no one to help her with the girls; there were sometimes sixty girls, and she had to teach them all. Once I asked Mr. Maxwell if he did not think Ellen would be a nice one to help her when she came back?"

"And what did he say?" asked Mr. Mordaunt. "Oh, he said he would speak to you, that she would be a very great assistance. We used to have such happy evenings there; they were so orderly, you might have heard a pin drop; and Mrs. Maxwell, and Anne her nurse, have taught them to sing such pretty hymns in parts. You will let me go again, dear papa, will you not, now you are settled; and may not Ellen come too?"

"We will see about it" answered Mr. Mordaunt, taking a newspaper out of his pocket and beginning to read. So Arthur ensconced himself in the corner, and gradually letting his cap fall over his face, gave himself up to his own meditations.

Did Mr. Mordaunt read that newspaper, or was it merely a pretext to obtain quiet? Most probably the latter, for soon it was laid across his knee, and throwing his cloak over him and his boy, he also leant back among the dark cushions. To scrutinise his thoughts during the two hours' drive that followed—with such a character as his, so apparently frank, yet in reality almost as completely sealed, in his inner mind, as the recesses of a yet unopened mine, would be an impertinent intrusion. Suffice it to say, he did think, and the past, present, and future, passed in succession before his mind. Jessie Blackburn too was there, and Ellen her friend, and his child. Mr. Blackburn, Maxwell, and finally himself, were in turn reviewed. Arthur sat perfectly still; either asleep or apparently so; yet if he had been asleep his dreams must have been very inspiring, for he jumped out of the coach as it stopped, with glowing cheeks and sparkling eyes.

On going up stairs they found Ellen making tea, and Mrs. Mordaunt sitting silently by, apparently engaged at work; but the continual application of her handkerchief to her face, and the deep sigh that now and then was heard, proved her heart to be otherwise employed. After an energetic embrace from Ellen, and one not less affectionate but more subdued from his wife, Mr. Mordaunt sat down and related the events of the day. This done, tea proceeded, the diminished party sat around the table, and poor Mrs. Mordaunt,

whose heart was overwhelmed at parting from her boy for the first time, was continually in tears. Mr. Mordaunt looked up from time to time at Ellen, he knew well what she must be feeling, that uncomfortable desolation which follows upon the departure of those we love—that clinging around the memories and associations of the past, when the soul struggles to regain possession of what is separated from the body. He could enter into *this*, for he had felt it. And he looked at her now, pale indeed, but so self-possessed, so cheerful, so earnestly endeavouring to enliven their little circle, and to make her parents feel that home was still *sweet* home.

He watched her raise her cup to her lips, and hide in its recesses the tears that rose, as Arthur picked up a glove of Mr. Blackburn's that had been half hidden under the sofa cushion. He saw her shortly afterwards pass round to fetch her mother's cup, and secrete the glove in her apron pocket. He saw all this, and more, and shall we say that he loved her and admired her for it? Yes, poor Ellen, could you have seen that hidden thought, it is hard to say whether it might not have driven away the heavy weight now pressing down your heart.

The evening passed on, and Mrs. Mordaunt proposed their going early to their rooms. Her husband left his station before the fire, and began to walk round the room examining the different little heaps of books or papers.

"Have you lost anything, dear papa?" asked Ellen.

"No," he answered, and continued his search.

In vain his wife repeated Ellen's question, and begged to know what he was looking for. At length he half turned round, and said—

"Where do you keep all your prayer-books?"

Mrs. Mordaunt looked up in surprise, but Ellen darted from the room, and in an incredibly short time had returned with her own, and as she gave it him kissed his hand. He smiled at her, and then said, with a little hesitation—

"We have lost our chaplain, but in memory of him let us have prayers to-night;" and he rang the bell for the servants. With a swelling heart Ellen took her seat. She felt for her father, thus for the first time leading the devotions of the family, and she did not look at him lest it should embarrass him. With his arm on the table, and his forehead leaning on his hand, he read a chapter from one of the Gospels, with a clear, but rather constrained voice; and Ellen felt, that with all her love for Mr. Blackburn, she would not change the present occupier of that chair even for *him*. Then followed the general confession, and a few of the Church prayers, during which he seemed to lose his slight embarrassment.

On rising, no remark was made by any one. He received Ellen's superabundant supply of kisses as she bade him good-night, and then she hurried up to her own room to pour forth her grateful

heart in thanks to that Almighty Father who had granted her a blessing for which she had never even asked.

The next day, Mr. Mordaunt found the books all ready for him on the breakfast table. He guessed who had put them there, and Ellen felt half ashamed of her audacity as she found a shade passed over his face. His displeasure, if he felt any, however, produced not the effects she dreaded. Once more the servants were summoned, and from that time the habit of family prayer was established in the house.

CONCLUSION.

A NEW EMPLOYMENT.

"I will go in the strength of the Lord God."—Ps. lxxi. 16.

THAT same day Mr. Mordaunt set out to call on the Maxwells, leaving Ellen to follow with Arthur. When they arrived they found the gentlemen talking earnestly together, and Mrs. Maxwell sitting listening. Ellen heard her father speaking—

"Indeed, I feel more than satisfied with all your arrangements; and could I do anything to serve you, Maxwell, I should be most happy."

"You have already been a most kind patron," said Mr. Maxwell; "and I have little left me to desire. And yet I should like to mention one thing. Our Sunday-schools are well attended; and though I have an excellent master, I find a great need for further assistance. During your absence, sir, I made full use of your sanction to treat your boy as my own (and he put his hand on the top of Arthur's head) and I found him a great help in the younger classes. Would it be too much to request

that help might still continue; for do you know, I miss him very much?"

Mr. Mordaunt was very much pleased at this frank speaking; it removed at once any suspicion of his having used clandestine measures to *Metho-dise* his boy; and the moment this fear was done away with, he responded warmly to the whole proceeding. He held out his hand, and said—

"Certainly, my dear fellow; I am glad you can make this young rogue of any use. I understand," said he, to Mrs. Maxwell, "that we have to thank *you* for the improved singing in the Church; and that you have more trouble with the school girls than you can well manage. You are a pattern of a parson's wife, Mrs. Maxwell."

"It is not the trouble," said Mrs. Maxwell, "that I mind, if only I could do the work effectually; but the dear children ought to be divided into classes and taught separately; and among the many good women of the parish, there is not one who is able to assist me."

"Will you like to have this girl of mine, Mrs. Maxwell?" and he took hold of Ellen's arm,— "there, go and present yourself, and ask if any use can be made of you."

But Ellen was too much astonished to reply.

"I shall be delighted," said Mrs. Maxwell, not less surprised, but with more self-command. "I could not have one I should like so well."

"Well, Ellen," said her father, "you stand there looking like a goose; do not you like this plan?"

“ Like it ! oh, yes, my dear papa ; ” and her face beamed with pleasure.

In the interval between this day and Sunday, Ellen was prepared for her duties by Mrs. Maxwell. They consisted of attending the school for an hour before morning service, and an hour after the afternoon. But it was during this last hour that Mr. Maxwell himself used to address the children, and then dismiss them.

On the following Sunday, Ellen commenced her new duties. She felt deeply her own incapability, and it was in dependance on strength not her own, that she entered that school-room ; yet, though naturally a little timid at first, she found leisure to notice Arthur, and was delighted to observe the grave though energetic manner, in which he went through the duties allotted to him. That afternoon Ellen once more visited the churchyard, and while Arthur led Annie round, and showed her the graves made there in her absence, he having attended many of the funerals with Mr. Maxwell, and known all about those who lay in them, Ellen made her way to her brother's grave, and alone and undisturbed, contemplated it and its humble neighbour. Again she read both inscriptions, and recalled to mind the former occasion when she had done so. The verse on Mary Ann Peters' grave brought Jessie Blackburn vividly before her mind, and again she seemed to see her on the rocky steep at Fiaschering, gazing on the blue and shadowy land before her, and to hear her soft sweet voice

reciting the triumphant words, whose full meaning she now perfectly realised. Her own state when last she stood there came forcibly to her mind, and the circumstances that had passed since then; and then she reflected on her present position. While thus engaged, the great mercy of the Lord to her touched and warmed her heart; it seemed as if in her case, the Word had been literally fulfilled, "I am sought of them that asked not for me. I am found of them that sought me not." Deeply humbled she felt at her own coldness of spirit towards Him who had shown so much love to her, but at the same time she *dared* not, actually *dared* not, doubt that He would continue to bless her, and would preserve her to the end. For had He not loved her, and called her to the knowledge of Himself, when she thought not of Him, and was wrapt in spiritual darkness; and did He not then know all the sins she would commit, and the hardness of her heart? And then she thought of that same Sabbath-day, and how she had actually entered upon duties similar to those of Martyn Blackburn, that holy child whom she never thought of without a kindling of the heart. Yes, she, Ellen Mordaunt, by her own father's desire, was a Sabbath-school teacher! Ah, that dear father, why had he done this? Why had he instituted family prayer? Surely he must be more favourably disposed than formerly; and if so, oh, suppose she should disgrace her profession by inconsistencies, and so place stumbling blocks in the way of him



whom she would have sacrificed every earthly thing to speed on towards heaven. Then all the difficulties of her home-path rose up before her, and her heart sunk anew, but she rallied her drooping courage by lifting her heart to the blessed Saviour and Friend of every pilgrim. "Yes," said she to herself, "He is my Saviour, why should I doubt? Have I not come to him? Chosen him for my own? and are not his promises the stay and refuge of my soul? Oh, most merciful Saviour, whose blood was shed for all that believe on Thee, and therefore for me, send thy Holy Spirit to seal me to Thyself for ever. Lord, I am thine. Here do I promise to serve Thee if Thou wilt give me grace. Let me adorn thy doctrine, and win my beloved parents to Thee by my consistent Christian conduct. 'Let thy grace be sufficient for me. Thy strength made perfect in my weakness.'"

The hues of evening warned Ellen to return, so calling her brother and sister she left the churchyard, and hastened home with a very serious, but yet happy heart.

And now we will for the present bid arewell to our young friend, leaving her to pursue her Christian course, and "fight the good fight of faith;" sometimes in light and comfort; sometimes in darkness and weariness; now victorious over temptation, and then again yielding to besetting sins and infirmities; at one period singing songs of praise, and at another weeping repentant tears

in humiliation and sorrow; but never letting go that hope in Christ which was the anchor of her soul.

Friends she had few beyond her own circle; her heart at times yearned for one with whom she might renew the hours of sweet converse, held with her beloved Jessie; but, perhaps, by this she was the more effectually driven to seek for peace and joy in the presence of her Saviour. She had, also, at times, much pleasant intercourse with the Maxwells, who watched with interest her progress on the way to Zion; but still she had no young friend of her own age and pursuits, except her brother Arthur; and, kind and affectionate as he was, she was more obliged to guide, and restrain, and influence him, than seek from him the support she herself needed.

Mr. Mordaunt was evidently gradually losing his prejudices against spiritual religion. He made no great professions; and for a long time Ellen's hopes and fears alternately prevailed concerning him; but his progress, if slow, was sure.

Mrs. Mordaunt's health was never strong; she was certainly softened towards Ellen's principles; and the latter always hoped that her extreme affection for Mr. Maxwell had a better foundation than a mere liking for the son of her husband's dearest friend, which undoubtedly had been the primary cause.

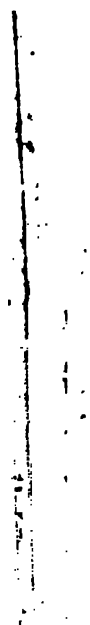
The children prospered. Arthur became Mr. Maxwell's daily pupil, and grew a fine promising

lad, with steady, upright principles; and those at home made good progress under Ellen's care.

Mr. Blackburn devoted himself to his ministerial work. Little Robert was his constant companion, and "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." James married in a short time, and was honoured by being a rich source of blessing to his people.

And thus we conclude. Should these pages prove instrumental in conveying to any perplexed or doubting reader some measure of instruction or encouragement, or should they, in these days of sad separation, be useful in persuading any, that wherever the truth is felt in its power, there is unity and brotherhood among the Lord's ministers, notwithstanding denominational differences, to the Lord alone be ascribed all the praise.





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